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**James Martineau : his emergence as a theologian, his Christology, and his doctrine of the Church, with some unpublished papers.**

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JAMES MARTINEAU: HIS EMERGENCE AS A THEOLOGIAN,  
HIS CHRISTOLOGY, AND HIS DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH,  
WITH SOME UNPUBLISHED PAPERS.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of some hitherto unexplored aspects of James Martineau's life and thought, based on his published works, his unpublished 'Biographical Memoranda', and some unpublished letters in Manchester College, Oxford. The introduction briefly describes the principal existing studies of Martineau, and points out the neglected areas of his thought, concerning his emergence as a theologian, his Christology, and his doctrine of the Church.

The first section traces the main influences upon Martineau's religious thought, in particular those of Lant Carpenter, Joseph Blanco White, Immanuel Kant, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and those of his ministerial colleagues. Included in this section is an account of his major theological controversies.

This is followed by a discussion of Martineau's doctrine of Christ. It deals with his rejection of orthodox Christology and gives a detailed account of his alternative Christology, based on the notion of God as spirit, filling and inspiring Jesus. The thesis argues that it is important to know what Martineau taught about Christ to understand his interaction with nineteenth-century Unitarianism, and that without his high doctrine of Christ Martineau's influence outside Unitarianism would have been reduced.

The third section deals with Martineau's doctrine of the Church as an inclusive society centred on Christ. The thesis examines his belief that doctrines are only approximations of an eternal reality, and his view that a truly catholic church should embrace a wide variety of opinion. His views on church unity, the Ministry and church organisation are also examined: it is argued that although many of Martineau's formal ideas were rejected, he did affect the emphasis of English Liberal Dissent.

The thesis maintains that Martineau's religious thought was influenced by those from a wide variety of traditions and not just by Unitarians; and that his Christology and his doctrine of the Church were more important than have been previously supposed. The 'Biographical Memoranda' and the unpublished letters in Manchester College are printed as Appendix A and Appendix B.

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I am also indebted to the University of London Central Research Fund for a grant of £108 to enable me to visit Manchester College to explore the unpublished material there. I am also indebted to Westminster College, Oxford, for the grant of a Sabbatical Term in the Summer Term of 1984.

I am grateful to the Rev. Raymond George, and Professor J. R. Watson for help and encouragement at various stages of this work; my greatest debt is to my supervisor, Professor Stuart Hall, for his advice and kindness throughout.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of some of the neglected aspects of the life and thought of James Martineau (1805-1900). His death in January 1900 was followed by a proliferation of newspaper articles, essays and editorials in the denominational and national press, as well as in the philosophical and religious journals of the day. Five biographies were published between 1900 and 1906, and of these four were written by Unitarians.

A. W. Jackson's James Martineau (1900) was the first. Jackson dealt with Martineau the man, the religious teacher, and the philosopher of religion. It was an American publication, written in competition with the official biography by Drummond and Upton; and perhaps its greatest achievement was that it beat the official biography into the bookshops by several months. Jackson relied heavily on his own reminiscences and the printed works of Martineau, but lacked access to the variety of letters, personal memories, and unpublished material available to Drummond and Upton. Theologically Jackson was in error, in that he wrongly assumed that Martineau while in Ireland held an Arian view of Christ (1) and also in misunderstanding Martineau's concept of sin. (2)

The official biography, The Life and Letters of James Martineau (1901) was written by James Drummond, Principal of Manchester College, and C. B. Upton, Professor of Philosophy there. The book is a valuable guide to those researching on Martineau, for it lists and comments on about one hundred and thirty-five of Martineau's published papers and with the occasional exception (3) accurately locates them in newspapers and journals. The book has also performed an invaluable service by printing

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1. This will be discussed in the chapter on Martineau's Christology.
  2. cf. A. W. Jackson, James Martineau (Boston, 1900), p.190.  
James Martineau, Studies of Christianity (London, 1858), p.469.
  3. One such exception was Martineau's review of: Joseph Blanco White's 'Second Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion', (1836).

many of Martineau's letters and thus preserving the contents long after the originals have been lost. The major short-coming of this work is that it was written from a strongly Unitarian perspective, which in one instance, at least, caused Drummond to edit out of a Martineau letter his criticism of the Unitarian movement. (4) His failure to acknowledge Coleridge's influence on Martineau also reflects Drummond's own narrow outlook. It is also surprising that the two authors only make three short quotations from Martineau's many sermons, in almost one thousand pages of text. This in itself suggests that they failed to appreciate that Martineau was first and foremost a Christian preacher, and that his essential thought and influence was disseminated more through his sermons than through his systematic writings. Moreover, Upton (who wrote on the philosophy of Martineau) overlooked the place of intuition in Martineau's thought and did not realise the importance of the roles of Kant and Blanco White in the fashioning of Martineau's theology.

The best biography of Martineau is undoubtedly Estlin Carpenter's James Martineau (1905). The very fact that Carpenter undertook this work suggests that he was dissatisfied with the official biography, and although he gives no indication of this in the preface to his book, there were those who openly voiced their dissatisfaction. (5) Carpenter produced a fine book which displayed an impressive grasp of the movements of thought within Unitarianism. He was sympathetic to Martineau, and in the concluding pages

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4. cf. MS. Letter of James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, December 22. 1891, Appendix B.  
James Drummond and C. B. Upton, The Life and Letters of James Martineau, 2 vols. (London, 1901), II, 211-12.

5. Alexander Craufurd, Recollections of James Martineau (Edinburgh, 1903), p.6.  
'I am very grateful to Dr. Drummond for a large store of information as to Martineau's external life; but the account seems to me rather deficient in two important ways. It makes no attempt to estimate the permanent value of his religion as compared with that of other guides; and it almost smothers or buries his vivid and remarkable personality under a huge mass of unimportant and sometimes rather wearisome details.'

of his work provided a most moving and accurate tribute to his achievements. The chief defect of the book is its lack of an index. But it also gives only a brief mention to subjects which require a more thorough treatment: the influence of Blanco White, the Liverpool Controversy, Martineau's 1840 experience, and his controversies with Herbert Spencer, John Tyndall and Henry Sidgwick.

The fourth biography by a Unitarian was Alfred Hall's James Martineau (1906) which was in part, as the Preface tells us, produced for those who did not have the time to read Drummond and Upton, or Carpenter. It was little more than a pencil sketch of Martineau, but well worth reading, even though the theological and ecclesiastical implications of Martineau's life lie beyond the scope of the work. Hall also fails to acknowledge the sources of his material, but he is accurate in his content, and as a native of Norwich, he set the scene of that background better than the larger biographies.

Martineau's non-Unitarian biographer, the Rev. Alexander Craufurd belonged to the Anglican High Church tradition. In Martineau's later years the two men had corresponded regularly. Craufurd's Recollections of James Martineau (1903) was more a collection of personal reminiscences than a theological biography. The book is rambling, but does contain some interesting details about Martineau's views of other theologians such as Maurice and Mansel, Bishop Butler and Cardinal Newman. On one account, however, Craufurd is seriously in error, namely that of labelling Martineau a Deist. (6)

Martineau's philosophy, ethics, and theism have been adequately studied. C. B. Upton's account in the second part of The Life and Letters of James Martineau (which was republished as Dr. Martineau's Philosophy in 1905) had been supplemented by Alfred Caldecott, Professor of Philosophy at University College, London, in The Philosophy of Religion in England and

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6. Alexander Craufurd, Recollections of James Martineau, pp.7, 196.

America (1901); by Henry Jones, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, in the Martineau Centenary Lecture, The Philosophy of Martineau, in relation to the Idealism of the Present Day (1905), and by A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, Professor of Philosophy at Edinburgh, in The Philosophical Radicals (1907).

During Martineau's own lifetime, Joseph Hertz, a Jewish Rabbi, submitted a Ph.D. Thesis to Columbia College, New York, on The Ethical System of James Martineau (1894) which was subsequently published. It is a detailed analysis of Martineau's ethics and raises some important questions about Martineau's ethical stance. More recently J. B. Schneewind in Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy (1977) gives a useful summary of Martineau's ethical position, although he does not examine it to the same depth or raise the critical questions discussed by Hertz. A very brief account of Martineau's ethics is also found in Henry Sidgwick's Outlines of the History of Ethics, sixth edition, (1931).

A thesis on 'The Theism of James Martineau' by Gerald McCulloh (Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1933) is a competent study of the subject but somewhat limited by the fact that McCulloh had no access to the extensive collection of Martineau's unpublished lectures and papers. He relied on the insight of Drummond and Upton's Life and Letters of James Martineau from which he quoted extensively. Surprisingly McCulloh made no attempt to show the place of Christ in Martineau's theism, but the subjects he did tackle, God as Cause, God as Perfection, God as the Soul of all souls, Freedom and Immortality are ably dealt with. McCulloh's work combined with that of Rudolf Metz (7) and Otto Pfleiderer (8) ensured that this area of Martineau's thought was well covered.

Three other publications should be mentioned. A short appreciation of

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7. Rudolf Metz, A Hundred Years of British Philosophy, translated by J. W. Harvey, T. E. Jessop and Henry Stuart (London, 1938)
  8. Otto Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant and its Progress in Great Britain since 1825 (London, 1890)

Martineau as a liturgist is given by Horton Davies in Worship and Theology in England: From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900 (1962). H. L. Short's The English Presbyterians (1968) is a useful book in that it clearly sets Martineau against the complex background of English Presbyterianism and Unitarianism. Alan W. Brown's The Metaphysical Society: Victorian Minds in Crisis, 1869-1880 (1947) is of importance in that it gives a detailed account of Martineau's contribution to the famous Metaphysical and Synthetic Societies.

This list of studies on Martineau is not exhaustive and does not include many articles of appreciation and criticism published on Martineau after his death (several of these will be referred to below). However it does cover the major studies on Martineau and is sufficient to reveal that there are some areas of his life and work which have not been fully explored: in particular, his Christology, his doctrine of the Church and aspects of the development of his religious thought. While it is not possible for biographers to cover every aspect of a person's development, it is surprising that there is little about the influence on Martineau of Coleridge, Kant and Blanco White, or that Martineau's important controversies with Henry Spencer and John Tyndall have not received more detailed treatment. In tracing Martineau's emergence as a theologian I have tried to redress this imbalance, and to discuss in more detail the influences on him of his family, of Lant Carpenter, of his co-editors of the Prospective Review, of William Ellery Channing, and of his part in the Liverpool Controversy of 1839.

The first chapter will be a theological biography, not intended to be complete in itself, but rather as a supplement to existing work. This chapter will also serve to set the context for the following sections on Martineau's Christology and his doctrine of the Church.

No detailed study of Martineau's Christology has ever been undertaken. This is not surprising, because a Unitarian theologian would seem an unlikely source of an adequate Christology. However, the second chapter of

this thesis is devoted to just such a critical study because a knowledge of Martineau's Christology is essential for an understanding of his religious thought, for an appreciation of the battles he fought within Unitarianism, and for an assessment of his influence on the wider church.

The third section of this study will be devoted to Martineau's doctrine of the Church, which again has been a neglected factor of Martineau's work; it is often assumed that Martineau was too individualistic and too speculative to have a concept of the corporate nature of the Christian Church. But Martineau's doctrine of the Church was Christocentric, and thus provides a close link between the second and the third chapters of this thesis.

In writing on these three areas I have made use of a considerable amount of unpublished material. These include sermons, letters, and the 'Biographical Memoranda' in the Library of Manchester College, Oxford. A selection from the letters and the complete text of the reconstructed 'Biographical Memoranda' is reproduced in the Appendixes of this thesis. The 'Biographical Memoranda' dates from 1876. When I began this study, I found that its pages had been scattered in different parts of Manchester College Library. With the enthusiastic help of the Librarian, Mrs. Barbara Smith, I was able to reconstruct it. It is an important document, giving a valuable insight into the life and work of a Nonconformist Minister in the nineteenth century.

It is therefore not the purpose of this thesis to deal with Martineau's ethics, his philosophy, his theism or his liturgy, except in so far as they impinge upon the themes being treated, for as we have seen these have been satisfactorily discussed. Martineau's emergence as a theologian, his Christology, and his doctrine of the Church, on the other hand, are three major neglected theological topics, whose treatment provides an important background for further Martineau studies on such topics as, Martineau as a hymnologist, Martineau as a preacher, the spirituality of James Martineau, Martineau and nineteenth-century



education, and Martineau and the care of the poor. All of these topics lie beyond the scope of this thesis, but there is ample material, both published and unpublished, for those who wish to explore any of these areas.

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## Chapter 1

### MARTINEAU'S EMERGENCE AS A THEOLOGIAN

#### Introduction

In the late Autumn of 1866 Augustus de Morgan packed up his books, vacated his study, and resigned his Chair of Mathematics at University College, London, to which he had been appointed some thirty-eight years previously. His students begged him to allow his photograph to be taken for the library of 'our old College'. He replied, 'Our old College no longer exists'. The College was only a reality for him as long as it adhered to its basic principle of refusing all religious disqualifications.

The cause of de Morgan's discontent was simple; earlier that same year the Rev. James Martineau, the strongest candidate for the Chair of Philosophy of Mind and Logic, had been turned down by the College Council: the recommendation of the Senate had been overturned by a coalition of those who wanted no minister of religion to be appointed and those who wanted only a minister of the Church of England. The opposition to Martineau was largely orchestrated by George Grote who argued that it was:

inconsistent with the principle of complete religious neutrality proclaimed and adopted by University College to appoint to the chair of mental philosophy and logic a candidate eminent as minister and preacher of one among the various sects which divide the religious world... (1)

What had upset de Morgan (and the aged Crabb Robinson) was that the religious neutrality of University College meant precisely the opposite of Grote's interpretation: the non-exclusion of scholars and teachers on religious grounds. De Morgan expressed his concern to Martineau:

I came here... on the understanding that a man in office may have any theology provided he sticks to his own subject in his class: if the stipulation is to be that a man shall have no theology, I am just as much disqualified as you;

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1. Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (London 1890), XXIII, 290.

and the College, instead of respecting conscience, snubs conscience; instead of comprehending everybody, excludes all but secularists. (2)

Croom Robertson, who was appointed to the Chair, went on to exert a powerful influence on philosophy in England, becoming the founder and first editor of the philosophical journal Mind. Martineau returned to his teaching at Manchester New College, of which institution he was shortly to become the Principal; from there he launched his great assaults on the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer and the materialism of Tyndall. These, together with his books, sermons, and addresses, were to be vital contributions to nineteenth-century English Christianity and caused A. M. Fairbairn, the first Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, to write:

It is largely owing to him that our age was not swept off its feet by the rising tide of materialistic and pseudo-scientific speculation. The qualities of his rhetoric made him the more efficient an apologist for his theistic ideas, and clothed it in an elegance of form that commended it to the fastidious in literary feeling. (3)

The work which Martineau did within the confines of Manchester New College resulted in Gladstone ranking him as the 'first among living English thinkers.' (4) P. T. Forsyth placed him alongside J. H. Newman and F. D. Maurice as the three outstanding theologians of the nineteenth century. (5) In order to appreciate his theology to the full, it is necessary to discuss the development of Martineau's theological ideas, and see him at work among his contemporaries.

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2. MS. James Martineau, 'Biographical Memoranda', Manchester College Library, Oxford.

3. H. J. McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement and the Religious Life of England (London, 1934), p.250.

4. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau (London, 1905), p.5.

5. P. T. Forsyth, 'Dr. Martineau', The London Quarterly Review, 93 (1900), p.217.

## Early Influences on Martineau

James Martineau was born in 1805, the seventh child of a middle-class merchant family. The house where he grew up still stands in Magdalen Street, Norwich, and is now a bicycle shop, but with a little imagination it can be pictured as it must have been in the opening years of the nineteenth century, with a steady stream of visitors, and with the intense discussions which took place round the fireside in the evenings; especially on a Sunday when Mr. Madge the Unitarian Minister would call.

The whole family worshipped at the nearby Octagon Chapel and it was on this fellowship that its social and cultural life was centred. The Octagon Chapel was a stimulating place: over the years several famous people had worshipped there, including Sir James Edward Smith, the Botanist; John Taylor, the hymn writer, and William Smith, Member of Parliament and grandfather of Florence Nightingale.

The home, too, had its own invigorating atmosphere. There were eight children, and the older children played their part in the formal education of the younger: Thomas, the eldest, taught Latin; Elizabeth taught French, and Henry writing and arithmetic. (6) All this activity took place with the enthusiastic support of their parents, who knew the importance of discerning encouragement in education. James later said of his father that 'he was always ready to strain every nerve to advance the education of his children.' (7)

Of all the children, Harriet and James were the closest and their impact on each other must have been formative. One of Harriet's earliest memories was of the birth of James, and in her autobiography she recalls how one night when he was one year old, she woke him up, pulled him out of the cot, and set him on a chair at the window: 'I wickedly opened the

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6. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, Virago Edition, 2 vols. (London, 1983), I, 53.

7. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

window, and the cool air blew in; and yet the maid did not wake.... The sky was gorgeous and I talked very religiously to the child.' (8)

At the age of fifteen, James was meeting with Harriet at seven in the morning in order to read Bishop Lowth's Prelections in the Latin. (9) This in itself is of some interest, since Lowth had been, in the eighteenth century, one of England's pioneer scholars in Biblical criticism, and had advocated the kind of reasonable approach to the scriptures later adopted by Martineau himself.

It was through the influence of Harriet that James, at the age of fourteen, was sent to Dr. Lant Carpenter's school in Bristol. Although in later life Harriet spoke with scorn about Lant Carpenter ('superficial in his knowledge, scanty in ability, narrow in his conceptions, and thoroughly priestly in his temper'), (10) there is no doubt, that at this time in her life, she was full of praise. Martineau recorded in his Biographical Memoranda:

The need of some change in the course of my education had probably been felt by my father and mother, when my sister Harriet brought home with her the happy fruits of a period of school life at Bristol and spoke with enthusiastic gratitude of the influence over her at Dr. Lant Carpenter's classes and pulpit services.

In addition to her gratitude to Lant Carpenter, Harriet attributed to him her love of David Hartley from whom she derived her strong sense of duty:

I cannot at this hour look at the portrait of Hartley prefixed to his work, or glance at his strange Scholia, - which I could almost repeat, word for word, - without a strong revival of the old mood of earnest desire of self-discipline, and devotion to duty which I derived from them in my youth. (11)

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8. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, p.17.

9. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, p.101.

10. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, p.95.

11. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, p.105  
David Hartley the philosopher and physician greatly influenced Joseph Priestley; who based his theology on Hartley's Observations of Man.

Whether or not James drew his own self-discipline and devotion to duty from Harriet is difficult to ascertain, but these were certainly ideas which they held in common.

James and Harriet shared walking tours which they took together both in the Lake District and Scotland. Like many literary figures of the time, such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott, they were responsive to the beauty which surrounded them.

To both of us it was a first free admission into the penetralia of natural beauty; and we walked everywhere with hushed feeling and reverent feet. We were perfectly at one, both in the defects which limited our vision, and in the susceptibilities which quickened it, neither of us caring much for the savage romance of Scottish traditions, and both being intensely alive to the appeal of mountain forms and channeled glens, and the play of light and cloud with the forest, the corrie and the lakeside. And in the fresh morning hours, before fatigue had made us laconic, the flow of eager talk, as is usual with young people, ran over all surfaces - even plunged into all depths - human and divine, with just the right proportion of individual difference to prevailing accordance for the maintenance of healthy sympathy. That journey lifted our early companionship to a higher stage, and established an affection which, though afterwards saddened, on one side at least never really changed. (12)

Here the seeds were sown of Martineau's romanticism, and ever afterwards he tried to create beauty in worship and buildings, writings and poetry, in sermons and hymns.

The influence was not all one-sided. Harriet confessed that James filled a larger space in her life and affections than any other person. It was through the persistent encouragement of James that Harriet made her first attempt at writing, (13) which subsequently appeared under the title of 'Female Writers on Practical Divinity' in the Monthly Repository.

The first prolonged break with Harriet came when James was sent to Lant Carpenter's school at Bristol, following four unhappy years at Norwich Grammar School. In Bristol he came under one of the dominant influences of his life.

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12. James Martineau, 'Biographical Memoranda'.

13. Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, p.118.

### Bristol and Lant Carpenter

When Martineau arrived in Bristol Lant Carpenter was at the height of his powers. He had recently been awarded the degree of LL.D. by the University of Glasgow and on two occasions had turned down the offer of a teaching post at Manchester College, York, where he was the Visitor and subsequently Vice-President. He was a man of immense energy, wide interests, and infectious enthusiasm, especially in enterprises which improved the opportunities and conditions of others. He joined whole-heartedly in the Anti-Slavery Campaign and expended an enormous amount of energy in the setting up of the Bristol Literary and Philosophical Institution, as he had previously done in the founding of the Exeter Select Library for the use of young people. He was also developing a growing academic reputation with his authoritative writing. This literary output consisted of some forty-two major works and papers on a wide variety of subjects. His interests ranged from the Geography of the New Testament and A Brief View of the Chief Grounds of Dissent from the Church of England to Systematic Education and a re-editing of Dr. Watts' hymns for children.

He carried this wide range of interests with him into his school work; he was a man of the world who read the daily papers to the pupils around the dinner table and kept them in touch with the Parliamentary debates. (14) He encouraged his pupils to start their own debating society and to care for the poor from their own funds. He laid great stress on moral and religious education, and introduced his pupils to contemporary Biblical criticism:

The critical reading of the Greek New Testament every Monday morning gradually accumulated an amount of theological information, respecting both the text and the interpretation of the sacred writings, rarely placed within the reach of any but divines. (15)

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14. Russell Lant Carpenter, Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Lant Carpenter (London, 1842), p.350.
  15. Russell Lant Carpenter, Memoirs of Lant Carpenter, p.352.

In addition, Martineau (along with Russell Carpenter) never forgot that Lant Carpenter's favourite expression to his pupils was 'Try'. (16)

Exactly what Martineau received from Lant Carpenter is not easy to determine; but some sixty years later in a letter to his old teacher's grandson, Estlin Carpenter, Martineau set down some of his memories. He had, he said, been greatly impressed with the breadth of education that he had obtained, and noted that the public Grammar Schools of the time provided only proficient teaching in Greek and Latin along with a little mythology and history. He remembered with pride that 'we had lessons in science, in history, in geography and in the Greek Testament' and 'smaller groups for Classics and mathematics.' (17)

This curriculum widened Martineau's horizons and gave him the foundation which enabled him to cope with the scientific revolution of the nineteenth century. But in addition to the curriculum there seems little doubt that he would have gained something of Lant Carpenter's sense of duty which he in turn had inherited from Hartley:

Hartley (Carpenter wrote) I deem my spiritual father, for it was from him that I first gained accurate and consistent ideas on the subject of human duty. (18)

Even more important than the subject-matter and the patterns of thought developed at Bristol, was the immediate influence of the man. Lant Carpenter was both a deeply religious man and a profound thinker, and his spirit stayed with Martineau for the rest of his life:

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16. Russell Lant Carpenter, Memoirs of Lant Carpenter, p.15.

17. MS. letter from James Martineau to J. Estlin Carpenter, December 20th, 1878, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

18. Russell Lant Carpenter, Memoirs of Lant Carpenter, p. 89. It is worth noting that in the Liverpool Controversy of 1839 Martineau turned to Lant Carpenter's Reply to Magee for help in this doctrinal dispute. Not only did he quote Lant Carpenter as an authority on that occasion, but a comparison of Martineau's five lectures in the controversy, with Carpenter's work reveals several points of influence, especially in dealing with the Improved Version of the Bible.



But the gratitude with which I think of those years is due chiefly to the personal influence of Dr. C.; under which my conscience seemed to wake up and life to assume its proper sanctity. (19)

On leaving Bristol, Martineau took up an engineering apprenticeship with a Mr. Fox of Derby. He was a kind and practical man, but he was unable to give Martineau a satisfactory theoretical and mathematical grounding for his mechanical interests. This failure, combined with other influences, changed the direction of his life. These included the death of a cousin, Henry Turner, the minister of High Pavement Church, Nottingham, in whose place Martineau felt he ought to serve; and his courtship of Helen Higginson, the daughter of a Unitarian Minister. Combined with his admiration for Lant Carpenter, these influences channelled his aspirations in the direction of the Ministry, and in 1822 he enrolled at Manchester College, York.

#### Manchester College, York

At this time Manchester College had a wide and varied curriculum, being a kind of mini-University for ministers and laymen with divinity as its central study. It is worth remembering that the Theology Honours School at Oxford and the Theological Tripos at Cambridge did not come into operation until as late as 1870-71, when it was recognised that the teaching of theology at both Universities was poor, and there was no real provision for undergraduate theological education. (20) At Manchester College, on the other hand, the tutors were in close contact with German religious thought. As early as 1818 John Kenrick had laid plans to study in Germany and attend the lectures of Schleiermacher. (21)

After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars there was a

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19. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

20. V. H. H. Green, The Universities (Harmondsworth, 1969), p.264.

21. Letters of John James Tayler, edited by J. H. Thom, 2 vols. (London, 1872), I, 24.

tendency for England to become more isolated, although contact with Germany in the early part of the nineteenth century was wider than is sometimes believed. During this time Manchester College, through its tutors and students, helped to preserve one of the several important links with Continental thought.

The staff of Manchester College, Charles Wellbeloved, John Kenrick, and William Turner were all competent men. It was the admirable teaching of Turner which gave fresh impetus to Martineau's mathematical studies and enabled him to attain an ambition of reading Newton's Principia. (22) Wellbeloved, the Principal, will long be remembered by the fine tribute Martineau paid him in his Opening of Session address to the College in 1858:.

Well do I remember the respectful wonder with which we saw, as our course advanced, vein after vein of various learning modestly opened out; the pride with which we felt that we had a Lightfoot, a Jeremiah Jones and an Eichhorn all in one, yet no mere theologian after all but scarcely less a naturalist and an archaeologist as well... Many of us have found the notes taken in his lecture room our best Cyclopaedia of divinity during the first years of our active ministry. (23)

The ethos of the College was more important than its curriculum. What Martineau found within the small circle of students was a prevailing spirit of devout enthusiasm which bound them together in strong affection, and subordinated their intellectual work to their higher aspirations. (24) His only complaint on leaving the College was that he had been taught Hebrew without points and the fluxational method of calculus rather than the differential method, both of which he had to re-learn in order to teach his students at Trinity College, Dublin.

#### Return to Bristol

In 1827, the illness of Lant Carpenter and his consequent absence from

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22. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

23. James Martineau, Essays, Reviews and Addresses, 4 Vols. (London, 1890-91), IV, 54.

24. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

the school resulted in Mrs. Carpenter inviting Martineau to Bristol to take charge of the fourteen pupils. He undertook this post for one year and it provided him with two important opportunities. The first came through the good offices of Dr. J. C. Prichard (25) who introduced Martineau to a private Philosophical Society of about twelve members. He looked back on these evening meetings of the Society as one of the most precious passages of life where he 'heard the ablest local men... discuss the newest questions of the time and the greatest questions of all time.' (26) He was for ever grateful to one member of the Society, Samuel Worsley, whose thoughtful suggestions and accurate geological knowledge Martineau greatly admired. Such a Society not only broadened his outlook but also laid the foundations for the part he was later to play in the famous Metaphysical Society, and for his defence of theism against those who propounded a purely mechanical evolutionary theory.

The second opportunity was that of hearing the great Baptist preacher Robert Hall on Thursday evenings at Broadmead Chapel. His style of preaching captivated Martineau:

Persuasion I never found in his preaching, but the contagious elevation of a powerful mind. He influenced men by not addressing them, yet thinking aloud before them. The more he forgot them, the more did their critical mood die down, and their secret sympathy rise up and go with him, till they saw his vision and prayed his prayer. (27)

There is not only the suggestion here of admiration but also of influence; Martineau subsequently decided to adopt a similar form of preaching himself, and kept to it in spite of later persuasion by Francis

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25. Dr. James Cowles Prichard M.D., F.R.S., M.R.I.A., the author of Researches into the Physical History of Mankind, was a member of the National Institute of France; a member of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Paris, and Hon. Fellow of King's and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland.

26. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

27. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

Newman to change and become a more popular preacher. (28)

### Ministry in Dublin

In the Summer of 1828, after one year in Bristol, he accepted the post of Junior Minister of Eustace Street Presbyterian Meeting House, Dublin, with the Rev. Joseph Hutton, the grandfather of Richard Holt Hutton, as his colleague. At the end of the same year, Martineau married Helen Higginson of Derby and settled down to his teaching and ministerial work with the hope of a long and fruitful stay in Dublin. In the event, his ministry lasted under four years, owing to his refusal to accept any part of the Regium Donum, the annual grant bestowed by Parliament on Presbyterian Ministers.

Two useful publications come out of Martineau's Dublin Ministry. In July 1830 he preached a sermon before the Synod of Munster on 'Peace in Division: the Duties of a Christian in an Age of Controversy.' It emerged from his own bitter experiences of religious division in Ireland and was a warning against the dangers of Christian controversy and an attempt to throw some light on the duties of the Christian in such circumstances.

The sermon had three main points. First, he maintained that it was the duty of every Christian to remember all the points of belief he held in common with other Christians. He emphasised the appeal to our affections of God the Infinite Being, and the Saviour who reveals to mankind the character of God. Secondly, he reminded his hearers of the moral innocence of mental error, and advocated the view that if a person is genuinely mistaken in his opinion he is not eternally banished from God. Thirdly, he asserted that it was the duty of every Christian in an age of controversy openly to state his opinions together with the evidence which satisfied him

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28. MS. letter from Francis Newman to James Martineau, undated; Manchester College Library, Oxford.  
'Your Sermon is made for the study not for the pulpit. Each sentence needs to be read three or four times ... Try to preach a little more popularly, so as not to strain the attention too painfully.'

of their truth. (29) This sermon was his first publication and, to judge by the Monthly Repository of 1830, it was well received in England.

His other literary achievement in Dublin was the publication in 1831 of his first hymn book, A Collection of Hymns for Christian Worship. The book contained two hundred and seventy-three hymns, five of which were by his sister Harriet. Martineau drew his hymns from a wider spiritual tradition than had many previous compilers of Unitarian or Non-Subscribing Presbyterian hymn books. And although he appears at this stage not to have discovered the Wesley hymns, both Watts and Bishop Heber were well represented. Martineau's hymn book and his published sermon both reveal that for him the emotional side of religion already had an important place in worship and in Church unity.

In the Summer of 1832 the Martineaus left their first home, said farewell to their friends, stood in silence together in the French Church-yard by the little grave of their first-born, and then crossed the sea with a son and a daughter to Liverpool to enter upon the most formative and productive period of James' life.

#### Ministry in Liverpool

Martineau now took up the position of minister of Paradise Street Chapel. It was here that he formed a close association with J. H. Thom and Charles Wicksteed of Liverpool, and J. J. Tayler of Manchester. These four were a constant source of encouragement to one another. They were aided by Blanco White, the turbulent Spanish Roman Catholic Priest, who became an Anglican and was a member of Oriel College Senior Common Room at the same time as Pusey, Newman and Hampden, and later became a close friend of Archbishop Whately before being introduced by Thom into the Liverpool Unitarian circle.

The four friends had many things in common. They were all young, and all Unitarian Ministers: Martineau, Tayler and Thom served the same

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29. James Martineau, Studies of Christianity (London, 1858), pp. 480-88.

congregations for twenty-five, thirty-three and thirty-eight years respectively. (30) They all had the same earnest desire to reconcile modern learning with the gospel, the same reverence for the person and work of Christ, and they shared a growing desire to move away from rationalism to a more spiritual faith. All of them had travelled abroad and studied in Germany, the other three long before Martineau. Wicksteed had a knowledge of Italian, French and some German, which had enabled him to read the works of de Wette and Paulus. He had even visited Paulus at Heidelberg and discussed at some length the great man's Leben Jesu. (31) Tayler had studied at Bonn and Göttingen as early as 1834 and from that time onwards had regularly met and corresponded with several leading German Professors (32); they included Ewald, the Old Testament Scholar, who was Eichhorn's favourite pupil, and Neander of Berlin, who had been a student of Schleiermacher. Tayler also formed a close friendship with Baron Bunsen and studied his works several years before they were made famous by Rowland Williams in Essays and Reviews (1860). They brought together an interesting variety of educational backgrounds. Thom was born at Newry, County Down, and educated in Belfast; Wicksteed was a student at Glasgow University; Tayler, like Martineau, was educated at Manchester College, York, but also at Glasgow.

For several years, while editing the Prospective Review, these four met once a month at Tayler's home. They dined, spent the evening together, and often stayed over-night. These were memorable occasions for all of them. Martineau undoubtedly felt that Tayler and Thom were the outstanding thinkers of the quartet, while he and Wicksteed 'contributed common sense

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30. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 385.

R. K. Webb, 'John Hamilton Thom: Intellect and Conscience in Liverpool', in View from the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers and Society, edited by P. T. Phillips (Toronto, 1978), p. 212.

J. H. Thom, A Spiritual Faith (London, 1895), p. xxv.

31. Memorials of the Rev. Charles Wicksteed edited by P. H. Wicksteed (London, 1886), p. 45.

32. Letters of John James Tayler, I, 177.

and some knowledge of affairs'. (33) Tayler disagreed, in so far as he saw Martineau as the rising star of Unitarianism. (34)

It is difficult to trace direct influences of any one of the four on the others. But there is no doubt from reading their correspondence and reminiscences that they interacted in a special way to stimulate and promote one another's thoughts.

#### Martineau and Priestley

It was during these early years in Liverpool that an important shift in Martineau's thought began to occur, which was to prove decisive for the development of Unitarianism in England. In 1833 he wrote a series of three articles on Priestley for the Monthly Repository. It was a work which showed areas of agreement between Priestley and Martineau, but it also revealed that Martineau's thought was moving along different lines. This essay painted a sympathetic portrait of Priestley, showing how in the early years of his ministry, deprived of social intercourse and friendship, he devoted himself to theological and linguistic studies. It included the distressing picture of Priestley at the end of his time in England as 'the Pastor driven from his flock, the author despoiled of his manuscripts, ... the philosopher hunted for his noble sympathy with his race.' (35)

Martineau characterised Priestley as a man of truth:

Were we to designate Dr. Priestley in one word, that word would be "truth"; it would correctly describe the employment of his intellect, the essential feeling of his heart, the first axiom of his morality, and even the impression of his outward deportment. (36)

There is a note of realism in the article in that it also depicts several of Priestley's shortcomings; his lack of memory and imagination,

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33. J. H. Thom, A Spiritual Faith, p. xix & xx.

34. Letters of John James Tayler, II. 59.

35. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 32.

36. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 36.

his notion of duty as empowered by conviction rather than by affection and his inability to admit doubt, for he saw that all his investigations must lead to truth or falsehood. Priestley's lack of picturesque illustrations in his narratives diminished their effectiveness, and he had a tendency to over-simplify difficult and complex truths. (37) On the other hand, Martineau was clearly in sympathy with Priestley's sense of life being lived in accordance with a moral principle, a principle which was not a blind superstitious obedience but an expression of conscience. This was finally worked out by Martineau in The Seat of Authority in Religion almost sixty years later. Martineau also followed Priestley's doctrine of Christ at this time, (38) although he had substantially altered it by the time he came to write Endeavours after a Christian Life ten years later. The essay discloses a romantic element in Martineau's nature (and lacking in Priestley) which can clearly be seen by Martineau's advocating that a theologian should imagine himself in the original setting of the New Testament to 'mingle with the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, and raise a reverential eye towards the crucified, and listen to the fainting cry of filial tenderness.' (39) It was precisely this approach which F. W. Robertson took from Martineau and used so effectively in his Brighton Sermons. The essay shows that Martineau had a good knowledge of German romantic thought, comparing Priestley to 'the noble school of German critics, whose genius has, in our own day, penetrated the mysteries, and analysed the spirit, of poetry and the arts.' (40)

On two important issues Martineau was beginning to move away from Priestley's position: on the characteristics of Christian worship, and on the necessarian theory. With reference to worship, Martineau contrasted

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37. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 23-29.

38. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 28.

39. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 25-26.

40. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 15.



## Priestley with Mrs. Barbauld:

Mrs. Barbauld's passion was for the beautiful and the sublime; and to her, devotion was poetry, akin to the aspirations of genius: Dr. Priestley knew nothing so noble as truth; and to him devotion was philosophy gazing calmly at the only object above itself ... Mrs. Barbauld understood the natural language of art, felt the deep expressiveness of whatever is beautiful in form and sound, and would have given to piety the majesty of architecture, and the voice of music: Dr. Priestley thought that the eye and the ear, with their physical gratifications, were only in the way in the work of realising great general truth, and would have worshipped with the simplicity of a spirit in space. Mrs. Barbauld revered human affections, even in their illusions and extravagances: she saw in them the passion for excellence, and the propensity to believe in its reality: she had probably observed the important fact (so conspicuous in Doddridge), that the tempers which are most devotional are generally the most tender in their human relations: she could discover no specific difference between the emotions yielded to ideal excellence on earth, and invisible perfection in heaven; and she dared to find an analogy between piety and love: Dr. Priestley, little given to Platonisms of fancy, holding that all feeling should be proportioned to the real qualities of its object, and forgetting that it cannot overpass the gulf between the created and the Creator, and expand itself to literal infinitude, condemned the expression as false and profane. (41)

He concluded that Mrs. Barbauld and Dr. Priestley were both right, except in so far as each denied the ideas of the other. This clearly suggests (as had already been hinted at in the preface to his first hymn book) that Martineau was moving away from the rationalistic worship advocated by Priestley to a worship which included emotion and affection, beauty and poetry, which alone could bridge the gap between God and man.

The second area where Martineau began to indicate a shift in thought

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### 41. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, 1, 30, 31.

Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743-1825) nee Aikin, was married to a Dissenting Minister the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, and spent much of her married life at Palgrave in Suffolk. She was a writer and poet who had close friendships with several of the leading literary people of the day including Joseph Priestley, Walter Scott, H. Crabb Robinson, William Wordsworth, William Roscoe and James Montgomery. Her father, the Rev. John Aikin D.D., was appointed tutor at the Warrington Academy in 1758, where she spent her teenage years.

was on the necessarian theory: Priestley, following Hartley, had concluded that people simply reacted to sensations from outside themselves. Martineau noted that the same sensations produce different reactions in different people. (42) He accounted for these varying results by concluding that individuals must have differing susceptibilities to external phenomena; for him, this began to undermine the determinist position.

#### Martineau on Bentham

In 1834 Martineau wrote a review of Bentham's Deontology; it was a straight-forward critical assessment of Bentham's work which Martineau later considered of insufficient importance to be included in any of his collected writings. In this review he outlined Bentham's theory which differentiated between voluntary and involuntary acts, maintaining that voluntary acts are selected on the basis of happiness. Thus any act which increases happiness is looked upon as virtuous, and any act which brings a balance of misery is to be considered a vice. Martineau held that Bentham's system had much to commend it, but he was highly critical of Bentham for his lack of sympathy with any views contrary to his own (a healthy respect for the opinion of others was something Martineau retained all his life). Martineau made the point that just because Utilitarianism was right, it did not mean that everyone holding different views was wrong:

The intolerant scorn with which Mr. Bentham thinks it incumbent upon him to treat all schemes of morality different from his own - is unworthy of his character as an acute and original philosopher. (43)

Thus in 1834 Martineau was willing to admit that the theories of the Utilitarians could lead to right actions. However, he went on to criticise Bentham for producing a selfish system which omitted benevolence, and which

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42. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 40.

43. James Martineau, 'Review of Bentham's Deontology', Monthly Repository, 7 (1834), 615.

was concerned only with actions rather than motives. Pleasure and pain, for Martineau, came from feelings and emotions as well as from actions. He gave the example of a fireman who might rush into a burning house to rescue a child in order to enhance his reputation or receive a reward. But an onlooker might do the same thing purely through a feeling of sympathy for the child. If the onlooker had not responded to that feeling, it would have brought him pain; if he responded, it would bring him pleasure. (44)

Martineau disapproved of Bentham's practice of evaluating every human action in terms of personal loss and gain, and for portraying human beings as exclusively motivated by views of the future and thus incapable of being influenced by the impulses and stimuli of the past. He further censured Bentham for dispensing with trial by motive and substituting trial by results. Martineau acknowledged that benevolence crept into Bentham's system in that he encouraged individuals to contribute to the happiness of others as this would in return promote their own happiness. He quoted Bentham:

By every act of virtuous beneficence which a man exercises, he contributes to a sort of fund, a savings bank ... out of which services of all sorts may be looked for, as about to flow from other hands to his. (45)

Against this position Martineau believed that true benevolence was expressed by the words of Jesus, 'If ye do good to them that do good to you, what thanks have ye?' In line with this he firmly held that thousands of kind acts were done every day which were not offered as assets in a deposit bank, but as free gifts.

It can be seen that by the mid-1830s Martineau had arrived at the basic position of his ethics; that motives, and not results, were the essential criteria for judging a person's actions. Moreover this review of

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44. 'Review of Bentham's Deontology', p.618.

45. 'Review of Bentham's Deontology', p. 622.

Bentham's Deontology revealed the beginning of Martineau's movement away from Utilitarianism (which he increasingly saw as a selfish doctrine) towards a theory of action based on inner feelings and compulsions which sprang from the conscience. The review is of additional interest in that it is an indication of Martineau's continuing adherence to aspects of Hartley's philosophy in that he followed Hartley's distinction between voluntary and automatic actions, his belief that everything had a cause, and his differentiation between the cause and the external effect. Where he eventually parted company with Hartley in 1840 (as Coleridge had done previously) was on the necessarian doctrine against which Martineau asserted the free will and personal responsibility of the individual.

#### The Rationale of Religious Inquiry

In 1836 Martineau published a remarkable little book under the title The Rationale of Religious Inquiry which went into four editions and would have been reprinted on more occasions if he had not prevented it. The book was reissued after Martineau's death with the title What is Christianity? This was Martineau's first book and its impact was extensive, especially in America where according to the Harvard Tutor, Joseph Henry Allen, it was responsible for starting the Transcendental Movement in American Free Churches:

The year 1836 may be taken, as well as any, as the birth-year of the Transcendentalism which had so much to do in shaping the form of liberal opinion we have known since; at least, for its emergence in the field of theology, for it was in that year that 'the first gun of a long battle was discharged, in a review by Mr. George Ripley of Martineau's 'Rationale of Religious Inquiry'. (46)

As far as English theology was concerned it was an important attempt to examine Christianity philosophically. In the Preface Martineau maintained that religion and philosophy had traditionally occupied

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46. Joseph Henry Allen, Our Liberal Movement in Theology (Boston, 1883), p.23.

different spheres with little or no contact between them, except in the field of natural religion. (47) Martineau published these lectures in the hope of providing an improved philosophical method of investigating Christianity; namely that religious truth must not be contrary to reason. The dominant contention of the book was that some aspects of orthodoxy did not stand up to the test of reason. He rejected the Roman Catholic notion of authority being vested in the Church, on the ground that such a view debased the value and integrity of the individual human mind.

It indicates an antisocial contempt for the human mind, a suspicion respecting the stability of the great principles of morals, a disbelief in the progressiveness of higher civilization ... (48)

He rejected the Protestant idea of the Authority of Scripture because it did not allow the individual to interpret scripture according to his own conscience and insight:

The sense of scripture then denotes your sense; the notions which it awakens in your mind. The denier of the word of God is the reader, to whom the Bible suggests ideas different from yours. The oppugner of divine authority is the recusant of your interpretation; the rejecter of infallible certainty is the disputer of your constructions; the unbeliever in the essentials is the questioner of your favourite conclusions.(49)

Martineau was not advocating that the Christian faith must lie within the limits of reason, but rather that although it goes beyond what reason can prove, it does not go against reason. He expressed this in the phrase, 'A divine right, therefore, to dictate a perfectly unreasonable faith cannot exist.' (50)

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47. James Martineau, The Rationale of Religious Inquiry (London, 1836), p. iii & p. iv.

48. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 36.

49. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 44.

50. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, third edition (London, 1845), p.26.

The Rationale reveals Martineau's essential approach to the Bible, which was that it should be interpreted as any other book. In this approach he moved away from the traditional Unitarian appeal which was to scripture alone. Previously, as Martineau points out, Unitarians had denied the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement and everlasting punishment, because they were non-scriptural; but Martineau in The Rationale took a new direction in Unitarian theology by denying such doctrines because they were irrational. (51) Moreover, The Rationale shows that by 1836 Martineau had a good knowledge of German theology and a high regard for it. (52) It is of interest to note, however, that by the time the third edition of The Rationale was published in 1845, his high opinion of German Christianity was beginning to wane:

This delineation of the spirit of an ideal church I still allow to stand. The hope of its early realisation in Germany, however, it seems impossible longer to entertain.  
(53)

The Rationale of Religious Inquiry was not simply rationalistic and critical. Martineau also argued strongly for a supernatural element in religion, to the extent of denying the name Christian to the anti-supernaturalists; (54) a denial he later retracted under the influence of Blanco White. In The Rationale glimpses can also be seen of Martineau's romantic spirit, where he speaks in glowing terms of Wordsworth and Scott, (55) and moreover attributes to the imagination a key function in interpreting the Bible.

We must go forth to labour in the fields of Galilee, and

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51. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, pp. 62-64.

52. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 73.

53. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, third edition, p. 73.

54. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 72.

55. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 88.

overhear the peasants talk of the new prophet of Nazareth:  
... The ravine of Kedron, the Mount of Olivet, must be like  
an evening walk, and the shady rills of Siloam like a  
noon-day rest; the "Beautiful Gate" must be too familiar to  
dazzle us with its golden reflection of the dawn; the  
levelled rock of Moriah our feet must daily climb, and pace  
the cloister of Solomon in frequent meditation ... (56)

The factors which led Martineau to the theological position of The Rationale of Religious Inquiry are uncertain. He did however say that while asking the question 'What is Christianity?' he was struck by the lack of logical preliminaries for settling such a question. (57) H.D. Roberts, in his history of Liverpool Nonconformity, maintained that it was the young people of Paradise Street Chapel who through their questioning led Martineau to a serious reconsideration of his views. (58) It is an attractive idea which has been reflected in the experiences of many who have taught able young people. Moreover, Martineau's 'Biographical Memoranda' lends some credence to this view, where he recalls of his young people's classes:

I found in them a delightful source of intellectual sympathy, with a succession of thoughtful young persons, and a salutary incentive for myself to preserve my mental stores from rusting and enlarge them by fresh accessions.

It is also true, however, that even before his arrival in Liverpool he had acquired a reputation of being a progressive thinker, whose ideas would have been further stimulated by his reading of German theology and by his collaboration with his three colleagues, Tayler, Thom and Wicksteed.

In the development of Martineau's religious thought there were two movements taking place at this time: one was towards a more critical approach to the scriptures and religious tradition, while the other was towards a religion based on feeling which emphasised worship and devotion

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56. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 59.

57. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry , p. iii.

58. H. D. Roberts, Hope Street Church Liverpool, and the Allied Non-Conformity (Liverpool, 1909), p. 393.

to Christ. We find elements of both these movements within The Rationale, although the critical element dominates. Martineau never perceived these two movements as being contrary to one another. His acute rational criticism of the Bible and tradition was to remove false conceptions in order to make way for faith and true religion. However it was not until 1840 that he found, in the work of Kant (as Coleridge had done before him) an intellectual structure which harmonised these two movements of thought and enabled him finally to jettison his adherence to the necessarian doctrine. This will be discussed in a further section below.

#### Blanco White and William Ellery Channing

During the 1830s two men, Blanco White and W. E. Channing, exerted an influence upon Martineau's thought. The importance of Channing in this respect has often been acknowledged, while the role of Blanco White in helping to fashion Martineau's religious thought has not been sufficiently recognised by his biographers.

Joseph Blanco White arrived in Liverpool in January 1835 from Dublin where for some four years he had been the guest of Archbishop Whately. He was immediately attracted to Liverpool Unitarianism and formed a friendship with James Martineau and J. H. Thom, who later became his literary executor. In his 'Biographical Memoranda' Martineau refers to his close and affectionate association with Blanco White:

During 6 years' tenancy of our first house (in Mount St.), 3 children were born to us; 2 daughters and between them a son; whose name Herbert, recalls to me (among other tender memories) the voice that gave it to him - that of Blanco White. Mr. White lived at no great distance. He was pleased with the idea of a simple service of Dedication at the parents' house; and although withdrawn from all public duty, readily consented, in an expression of private friendship to join our thanksgiving and leave us with his benediction.

Little correspondence between the two men has survived; it may well have been that the proximity of their homes resulted in no great need for letter-writing. One letter, however, written by White to Martineau had an important effect on the development of Martineau's religious thought. On



the publication of The Rationale of Religious Inquiry in 1836, Blanco White penned Martineau a letter in which he set down important aspects of his own thinking and criticised one of Martineau's assertions; namely that of denying the name 'Christian' to the anti-supernaturalist:

You still take upon yourself to deny the name of Christians to men who claim it, only because their views do not fully agree with your own. (59)

In the second edition of The Rationale, Martineau published White's letter and in the third edition of 1845 added a Preface which conceded White's point:

There is, however, one opinion maintained in the preface to the second edition, and omitted in this, which would be disingenuous to pass without a word. The name Christian is there denied to the class of persons usually called Antisupernaturalists; and for that denial reasons are given which the Author does not now think to be conclusive in their whole extent. (60)

Blanco White's letter had an impact on Martineau's thought far greater than his biographers realised. White argued against the idea of Christianity being essentially a priestly religion.

Christ declared himself against all religion which made salvation, or spiritual safety, dependent on a priesthood and its peculiar offices. (61)

Three years later Martineau had taken up the same theme which he vigorously propounded in his lecture 'Christianity without Priest and without Ritual' delivered during the Liverpool Controversy of 1839, which he concluded by saying:

Christianity, then, I maintain is without Priest, and

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59. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 118.

60. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, fourth edition (London, 1853), p.vii.

61. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p. 111.

without Ritual. It altogether coalesces with the prophetic idea of religion, and repudiates the sacerdotal. Christ himself was transcendently THE PROPHET. (62)

Blanco White, also maintained in the letter that 'Christ published the religion of conscience, which though essentially grounded upon the nature of man ... had been obscured, and almost placed beyond the mental reach of the mass of mankind.' (63) It was an idea which became embedded in Martineau's thought and was later developed and expressed in such a way as to represent his complete break with the determinism of Priestley and the Utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill. In the last sermon he preached from the pulpit of Paradise Street Chapel, before departing for Germany and returning to the newly-built Hope Street Church, he defined what he was attempting with his congregation:

to substitute among you the Religion of Consciousness for the Religion of Custom ... that precisely in proportion as the affections are pure and deep, the conscience clear and strong, and the imagination familiar with great and beautiful examples, are heavenly realities discerned. (64)

The clear strong conscience had become one of the great pillars of his theism. (65)

There are several parallels which can be drawn between White's theology and that of the later Martineau which strongly indicate that White played an important part in shaping Martineau's subsequent theology. It was White who encouraged Martineau to come to terms with the inner nature and discernment of religious truth. White proclaimed:

Man must turn to the light within him, aided by its

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62. James Martineau, Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, (Liverpool, 1839), p. 38.

63. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, pp. 110-111.

64. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 426.

65. Alfred Caldecott, The Philosophy of Religion in England and America (London, 1901), p. 343.

developments in Christ - the highest, the purest, the best guide he knows. He must follow that light; he must sacrifice his selfish will to the duties which conscience points out. (66)

These features of the Inner Light, of conscience, of self-surrender and of Christ being the highest and the best known to man, were all to become intrinsic parts of Martineau's thought. In his last letter to Estlin Carpenter written some sixty years after Blanco White's death he spoke of his great admiration for the Society of Friends, who took their stand on 'the inward "Spirit of God" in the responding Conscience.' (67)

White, moreover, regarded the material view of God which existed in the common mind as the greatest obstruction to true religion. He nourished his own religious life on the words, 'God is Spirit.' (68) In this view Martineau followed White and in 1837 preached a sermon on 'Characteristics of the Christian Theory of God' where he clearly developed the theory of God as Spirit. (69) In the years which followed the publication of The Rationale, Martineau's overall view of Christianity had a similar emphasis to that of White, who saw Christianity 'as the religion of life, the acceptance by the heart and soul of the moral and spiritual Christ.' (70)

Martineau's debt to White made him no less critical of White's failings. He noted with some sadness that White's successive changes in churchmanship were produced by a series of repulsions of his current beliefs rather than by an attraction to new truth. Moreover Martineau felt that White's lack of 'moral enthusiasm' had deprived him of 'strength, and

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66. Joseph Blanco White, Observations on Heresy and Orthodoxy, reprinted from the second edition (London, 1877), p. xxxi.

67. MS. letter from James Martineau to Estlin Carpenter, July 18th 1898, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

68. Joseph Blanco White, Heresy and Orthodoxy, p. xxxii.

69. James Martineau, National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses (London, 1903), pp. 221-236.

70. Joseph Blanco White, Heresy and Orthodoxy, p. xxix.

joy, and faith', in his religion, (71) which were precisely the qualities Martineau found in his other great formative influence of the 1830s, that of the American, William Ellery Channing.

In his article on Channing, published in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, Martineau maintained that while White and Channing were at one on the essential issues of theology, they were very different in temperament and outlook.

Blanco White and Channing were attached friends; and in the memoir of each, the correspondence of the other constitutes one of the chief ornaments. On the most momentous topics of human thought, their opinions for many years concurred; yet how different the whole structure of their mental nature! (72)

Martineau was first introduced to the writings of Channing through Lant Carpenter who was staying with a Mrs. Coppe of York in 1821 when she received a copy of Dr. Channing's sermon The Evidences:

Dr. Carpenter read it with delight instead of taking his breakfast, for he had hardly time for both:-  
"Aye," said he, "this will do, this will do indeed." (73)

He promptly took it back to Bristol for use in the Lewins Mead Chapel and in his school where Martineau was a pupil. Some thirty years later when Martineau wrote an appreciation of Channing he noted that Channing produced no great or lasting work of history, philosophy or art, but that his influence was 'wide and deep'. (74) Channing's impact on Martineau was considerable, as can be seen from Martineau's paper delivered to the London gathering in 1880 celebrating the centenary of Channing's birth. In that Address, Martineau set down what he considered to be the heart of the

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71. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 147.

72. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 146.

73. Russell Lant Carpenter, Memoirs of Lant Carpenter, p. 260.

74. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I. 144.

American's teaching:

The single thought of which, from first to last, it was the living expression is this, that MORAL PERFECTION IS THE ESSENCE OF GOD AND THE SUPREME END FOR MAN; in the one, an eternal reality; in the other, a continuous possibility; in both the ground of perpetual spiritual communion ... not of Morality in the mere Social sense, of a rule of conduct between man and man; or in the Negative sense, of a repressive law, saying of this or that, "Thou shalt not;" but of Moral Excellence in the Divine and Positive sense, of an ever-active sway of best affections, an eternal life of holy will, an infinitude of spiritual beauty and love for the true and good, inherent always in the Father of spirits, and open to the approaches of all his children. (75)

Martineau then went on to outline the resultant effect of this central idea on both Channing's theology and his ethics. In his theology Channing allowed nothing to be said of God which contradicted his moral nature. In his ethics Channing affirmed that everyone had the capacity to discern right from wrong and the power to pursue the right. (76)

In this important Centenary Lecture, Martineau set out clearly his own development of Channing's thought:

Thus, by the simplest expansion of Channing's Primary Thought, Duty becomes supreme over the personal life; Reverence, over the social; Aspiration over the spiritual; and Love for the true, the beautiful and the good, over all. (77)

In addition to the view shared by both men that morality was central to Christianity, there were four other areas where the ideas of Channing were sufficiently similar to those of Martineau to suggest that the older man had either influenced the younger, or at least had reinforced his religious thought.

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75. James Martineau, 'Address to the London Meeting', in The Channing Centenary, 1880 (London, 1880), p. 36.

76. These were precisely the points which Martineau took up and enlarged in his article 'Five Points of the Christian Faith', written in 1841 i.e. 'We have Faith in the Moral Perceptions of Man, and 'we have Faith in the Moral Perfection of God.' Studies of Christianity , pp. 179, 184.

77. James Martineau, Channing Centenary, p. 38.

Firstly, Channing and Martineau each held that Christ was central to Christianity and both wrestled against those who advocated that Christ was no longer necessary to their religious thought. In a letter to Miss. E. Peabody written in 1841 Channing maintained that there was a profound ignorance of Christ among those who found him restrictive or who felt they had out-grown him. (78) The following month he wrote to Martineau on the same subject:

Some among them ... I fear are loosening their hold on Christ. They are anxious to defend the soul's immediate connection with God. They fear lest Christ be made a barrier between the soul and the Supreme, and are in danger of substituting private inspiration for Christianity. (79)

Channing's stand against those who wished to remove Christ from Christianity was a position which Martineau took up for English Unitarianism and which was forcefully expressed in his letters to Valentine Davis and Francis Newman, against growing opposition.

Secondly, Channing shared with Martineau a view of Unitarianism as a transitory doctrinal position which described the belief of individuals rather than the creed of a Church. Channing's lack of interest in Unitarianism as a denomination was clearly expressed in a letter to W. Trevilcock written in August 1841.

I distrust sectarian influences more and more. I am more detached from a denomination, and strive to feel more my connection with the Universal Church, with all good and holy men. I am little of a Unitarian, have little sympathy with the system of Priestley and Belsham, and stand aloof from all but those who strive and pray for clearer light, who look for a purer and more effectual manifestation of Christian truth. (80)

This was a position which Martineau adopted and ably expressed both in his correspondence with Professor Knight of St. Andrews, and in his

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78. W. H. Channing, William Ellery Channing, D.D. (Boston, 1880), p. 454.

79. W. H. Channing, William Ellery Channing, p. 454.

80. W. H. Channing, William Ellery Channing, p. 427.

controversy of 1859 with McDonald of Chester. Martineau wrote to Knight in 1872 pointing out that there was no such thing as a 'Unitarian Body' or a 'Unitarian Denomination', for Unitarianism was not a Church but a theology held by people of various ecclesiastical affiliations. (81)

Thirdly, Channing confirmed Martineau's own view that divine goodness was intuitively known and inwardly discerned. In a letter to Martineau dated 1841 he answers Martineau's question of how God's goodness is to be reconciled with man's experience of human affairs.

It is so long since doubts of the Divine goodness have crossed my mind, that I hardly know how to meet them. This truth comes to me as an intuitive one. I meet it everywhere. I can no more question it than I can the supreme worth of beauty or virtue. (82)

A few months earlier, Martineau had written to Mary Carpenter expressing the view that the divinity of a person or a thing is always discerned intuitively. (83) Although Martineau never systematically expounded his belief in intuition, there is little doubt that after his contact with Channing it became an intrinsic part of his theory of knowledge. (84)

Fourthly, Channing played an important role in encouraging Martineau to abandon his belief in philosophical necessity, which had been a key feature of Unitarian doctrine since the time of Priestley. As early as 1831 Channing was writing to an English Unitarian, Lucy Aikin, expressing his opposition to Priestley's doctrine of philosophical necessity:

Now Priestley's system of materialism, of necessity, and of the derivation of all our moral sentiments from sensations

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81. William A. Knight, Inter Amicos: Letters between James Martineau and William Knight 1869-72 (London, 1901), pp. 79-80.

82. W. H. Channing, William Ellery Channing, p. 454.

83. MS. letter from Mary Carpenter to James Martineau dated February, 1841, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

84. Alfred Caldecott, The Philosophy of Religion in England and America pp. 348-352.  
G. O. McCulloch, 'The Theism of James Martineau' (unpublished dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1933).

variously modified by associations, does seem to strike a blow at our most intimate and strongest moral convictions, whilst it robs our nature of all its grandeur. (85)

Miss Aikin's reply showed that Channing had raised doubts in her mind as to the compatibility of the Scriptures and individual moral decision with the doctrine of necessity.

By 1839 Martineau's own doubts about philosophical necessity, which he had suppressed for some years, were surfacing; so much so that in his lecture on 'Moral Evil' delivered during the Liverpool Controversy of that year, he launched his first tentative attack against the doctrine. On reading this paper Channing wrote to Martineau expressing his full support and encouragement in this movement of thought:

The part of your discourse which gave me the sincerest delight, and for which I would especially thank you, is that in which you protest against the doctrine of philosophical necessity. Nothing for a long time has given me so much pleasure. I have felt that that doctrine, with its natural connections, was a millstone round the neck of Unitarianism in England. (86)

Some years later, when making notes on the correspondence he had received, Martineau recorded with some pride that his treatment of the doctrine of necessity had been greeted by Channing with 'unqualified satisfaction.' (87)

However according to Martineau's Biographical Memoranda the complete break with philosophical necessity occurred not with the Liverpool Controversy of 1839, but in 1840 with his appointment to the Tutorial Staff of Manchester College.

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85. Anna Letitia Le Breton, Correspondence of William Ellery Channing and Lucy Aiken from 1826-1842 (London, 1874) p.81.

86. W. H. Channing, William Ellery Channing, p. 447.

87. See Martineau's notes on his correspondence in Manchester College Library, Oxford.



## The Liverpool Controversy

In 1839 Martineau was thrown into the Liverpool Controversy when the evangelical Incumbent of Christ Church, the Revd. Fielding Ould, sent out an invitation, by poster and in the press, to the Unitarians of the City to attend a series of lectures in which the errors of their belief would be exposed. The lectures were to be given by thirteen clergymen of the Church of England, mainly from the Liverpool area but including among their number the Revd. H. W. McGrath, Rector of St. Anne's, Manchester, and the Revd. W. Dalton, Incumbent of St. Paul's, Wolverhampton. The three principal Anglican participants in the controversy were Thomas Byrth, Fielding Ould and Hugh McNeile, who appear to have formed themselves into a sub-committee to direct the course of the campaign.

On the Unitarian side, James Martineau, John Hamilton Thom, Minister of Renshaw Street Chapel, and Henry Giles, of Toxteth Park Chapel, readily accepted the invitation and offered to encourage their respective congregations to attend the Christ Church lectures; moreover they issued a reciprocal invitation to the Anglicans of Liverpool to hear a reply to each lecture to be given in the Paradise Street Chapel. This move was keenly supported by the Unitarians of the City; the minutes of Paradise Street Chapel Committee recorded a resolution to defray all the expenses of the contest and to provide a congenial atmosphere for the Unitarian defence by ensuring that there was both a soloist and an organist, and that arrangements had been made for the 'warming of the Chapel'. (88)

Before the series of lectures began the Liverpool press carried a long correspondence between the two sides, which was an attempt to explore other means of pursuing the public debate. This correspondence eventually broke down over a fundamental disagreement on the plenary inspiration of

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88. Henry D. Roberts, Hope Street Church, Liverpool, and Allied Nonconformity, pp. 358-9.

the scriptures, (89) with the following charges being made against Martineau and his colleagues:

1. That you do not believe in a written and infallibly-accurate Revelation from God to man.
2. That Paul the apostle may have "reasoned inaccurately" and "speculated falsely".
3. And that, consequently, you feel yourselves at liberty to judge his statements (and all statements of Scripture) as you do those of any other books. (90)

Against such changes the Unitarians had already argued:

We conceive that the real controversy between us respects the nature of Christianity itself; - you holding the Revelation to consist in doctrines deducible from the written words; we holding the Revelation to be expressed in the character and person of Jesus Christ, and to be conveyed to us through a faithful and authentic record. Which of these two ideas is Scriptural? - that is our controversy. (91)

This preliminary correspondence, which occupied the columns of the Liverpool Mercury, the Liverpool Courier and the Liverpool Albion, aroused great public interest, so much so that on the occasion of the first lecture Martineau, Thom and Giles had difficulty in getting into a crowded Christ Church. On subsequent evenings a pew was reserved for them which Martineau referred to as the 'condemned pew'. Similarly there were queues outside the doors of Paradise Street Chapel to hear the Unitarian replies, even though Fielding Ould had prevailed on his congregation not to attend.

Beginning on February 6th 1839, the thirteen lectures were given from the pulpit of Christ Church on Wednesday evenings, and the

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89. James Martineau, John Hamilton Thom and Henry Giles, Unitarianism Defended (Liverpool, 1839), pp. 30-35.  
In this volume is printed all the correspondence which preceded the debate.
  90. Unitarianism Defended, p. 35.
  91. Unitarianism Defended, p. 32.

counterstatements were made in Paradise Street the following Tuesday evenings. The main thrust of the orthodox attack was set out in the first lecture by Fielding Ould who accused the Unitarians of lowering the authority of scripture, diminishing love for Jesus Christ, fostering pride, and promoting infidelity. (92) In addition to this they were charged, by Henry McGrath, with devaluing the sacraments, (93) and by Hugh Stowell of ignoring the personality and function of Satan.

In their defence Martineau and his colleagues stated that:

To exalt the spiritual character of Faith above the verbal and metaphysical, - to unite mankind through their common love and acceptance of Christ's goodness and of Christ's God, - to make his Church one by their participation of one spirit, even the spirit of the life of Jesus, - has been our highest aim, not only on this particular occasion, but throughout all our Ministry. (94)

The whole controversy placed an enormous strain on Martineau who had to continue his ordinary work of Sunday Services, and week-day teaching in his home and in the elementary schools, as well as preparing his five discourses for the confrontation: 'The Bible; what it is, and what it is not'; 'The proposition "That Christ is God", proved to be false from the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures'; 'The scheme of Vicarious Redemption inconsistent with itself, and with the Christian idea of Salvation'; 'Christianity without Priest, and without Ritual'; and 'The Christian view of Moral Evil'. Martineau's papers were well-argued and closely-reasoned treatises containing many of the seeds which came to fruition in his later works.

At the end of the controversy Blanco White declared, not without bias, that the Unitarians were the outright winners, but his criticism of both

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92. Fielding Ould, 'The practical importance of the Controversy with Unitarians', Unitarianism Confuted (Liverpool, 1839), pp. 2-36.

93. Henry McGrath, 'The Sacraments practically rejected by Unitarians', in Unitarianism Confuted, p. 597.

94. Unitarianism Defended, p. xvii.

the Unitarians and Anglicans, although partisan, may well be a fair assessment of the situation.

On our side, productions have appeared, which, though written on the spur of the moment, show a vitality of interest, a logical power, an acquaintance with the philosophy of mankind (the only sound basis of theological knowledge), a familiarity with early ecclesiastical history, a power of eloquence, a dignity, an unflinching honesty, a command of temper under insults, which may justly make us proud of our leading religious instructors.  
(95)

Reading the lectures and mass of correspondence over a century later, it appears that White's comments contain much truth and that the Unitarians, especially Martineau and Thom, out-thought their opponents by their carefully-prepared philosophical and theological arguments. Blanco White's opinion of the contribution made by the Anglican protagonists was equally discerning:

Having had time to reflect on the character of the Sermons which, to judge from the noise and pomp of their first announcement, were intended to crush Unitarianism for ever, I cannot but be convinced that they have done more for our peculiar belief than even the admirable answers with which they have been met .... Some are full of tricks unworthy of the place whence they were delivered; others are miserable; in one or two there appears a steady and not uninformed mind, which is betrayed by and sinks under an intenable proposition! Only one is intended to dazzle by a display of Greek criticism; but it happens to be quite irrelevant to the question. It has so thoroughly the air of an old self-inflicted long-vacation task .... I repeat my conviction that the Unitarians, not only in this town, but wherever the controversial Sermons, and more especially the Letters of the challengers may be read, must eventually gain by this otherwise odious contest. (96)

White's view seems to be substantiated by the fact that at the close of the controversy three Anglican laymen, Samuel Bulley, Isaac Bancroft Cooke, and Charles Edward Rawlins, together with their families announced their

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95. Joseph Blanco White, Heresy and Orthodoxy, p. 1.

96. Joseph Blanco White, Heresy and Orthodoxy, pp. li-llii.

conversion to Unitarianism and joined the Paradise Street congregation.(97)

There is no record of any Unitarian joining the Church of England.

There was however a kind of irony about the debate. The Anglicans were attacking a Unitarianism of the past, (which Blanco White estimated was some thirty years out of date): (98) this can be seen by their constant references to Priestley, Belsham and Lindsey, together with their unremitting attacks upon the 'Improved Version' of the Bible, totally disclaimed by the Unitarians early in the confrontation. (99) There was a cry from the heart in William Dalton's lecture when he asked:

will not the Unitarians of London and elsewhere abide by the defence of Unitarian doctrines which the lecturers connected with that body in Liverpool have undertaken to make, or should they read their published lectures, and feel dissatisfied with their attempt to reply to our solemn accusations, may they not exclaim, "These are not our standards of theology - we prefer the down-right assertions of Priestley and Belsham, and the notes of the Improved Version. We hold not with these wire-drawn refinements of modern Unitarianism." (100)

The implication here is that Dalton would rather have attacked the work of Priestley, Belsham and the 'Improved Version' of the Bible, than the more sophisticated and Christ-centred approach of Martineau, Thom and Giles.

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97. Henry D. Roberts, Hope Street Church, Liverpool, and Allied Non-conformity, p. 404.

98. Joseph Blanco White, Heresy and Orthodoxy, p. li.

99. The Improved Version of the Bible was produced by Theophilus Lindsey (when an old man) and his associates. Brackets were used for passages which the editors felt should not be included in the text. They used italics for sections of the text which they believed were of doubtful authority, and they retranslated other sections of the Bible. However the resultant 'Bible' was never widely used within Unitarianism. Within a year of its publication Lant Carpenter wrote a critical review for the Monthly Repository of 1809. Martineau recalled: 'During a five year course of study at the theological college where I received my education for the ministry, I do not remember any mention of it in the theological classes, and only two in the Greek classes; both of which were condemnatory.'

100. William Dalton, 'The Eternity of Future Rewards and Punishments', in Unitarianism Confuted, p. 729.

There was however some truth in Dalton's allegation. Ian Sellers in his study of 'Liverpool Nonconformity' was incorrect when he maintained that Martineau and Thom were 'defending a system in which they no longer believed'. (101) They were doing no such thing: the lectures for example, contained no attempt to defend the old Priestleyan mechanical system, but on the contrary, included a tentative attack on it. What Martineau and Thom were actually doing was propounding a new Unitarianism which was ahead of its time. Charles Wicksteed demonstrates this when he maintained that what the Liverpool Defenders admitted and asserted was 'then contemplated by the older, and, we are sorry to add, many of the younger men, ( of Unitarianism ), with suspicion and alarm, as involving a too free, even destructive criticism', (102) so much so that although the Anglican and Congregational periodicals reviewed the controversy, in those circulating among Unitarians, principally the Christian Reformer, there was an almost total silence on the subject. It was not until 1877 that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association finally published a bound volume of the proceedings of the controversy, proclaiming it a Unitarian success.

The controversy caused Martineau systematically to set down his developing views on a wide variety of theological issues. His lectures show that he had abandoned the idea of revelation as a body of truth whose authenticity was assured by miracles, and had replaced it by a new view, hinted at before, but now expounded in detail, that revelation had to be received by the individual soul, (103) and that its appeal was not to external authorities but to the conscience and the affections. He also laid great emphasis on the character of Christ rather than on his

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101. Ian Sellers, 'Liverpool Nonconformity' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Keele, 1969).

102. Charles Wicksteed, 'The Liverpool Controversy of 1839', The Theological Review, Vol. 14 (1877), p. 85.

103. James Martineau, 'The Bible; What it is and, What it is not', in Unitarianism Defended, p. 43.

teaching.(104) Miracles were still important but they were performed not to guarantee truth, which could be verified internally, but as a compassionate act of Christ in response to human need. Martineau's contribution to the controversy reveals that two key pillars of his theism were already in place by 1839: his belief in 'the rational necessity of an adequate spiritual cause for the cosmos, and the ethical experience of a superhuman Presence and Authority in the Conscience'. (105)

By the close of the Liverpool Controversy in May 1839 Martineau had moved away from Priestley's emphasis on scriptural authority, his predominantly rational approach to Christianity, his citation of miracles as proof of Christ's authenticity, and his view of morality (which Martineau felt was concerned with end results and consequently tended to stress merely prudential motives). (106) Moreover, as we have already noted, in the Liverpool Controversy Martineau takes his first tentative steps against philosophical necessity, which was one of Priestley's favourite doctrines.

Two incidents from the Controversy reveal something of Martineau's own character. The first was that in 1841 the Revd. Franklin Baker of Bolton and the Revd. Dr. Shepherd of Gateacre published works which showed that Fielding Ould had borrowed much of the structure and composition of his lecture from Andrew Fuller's Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared. Some Unitarians gave the exposure a great deal of publicity and Fielding Ould himself was the subject of much mockery. (107) There is however no mention of this incident in any of Martineau's papers or the

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104. James Martineau, 'The proposition "That Christ is God", proved to be False from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures', in Unitarianism Defended, p.4.

105. James Drummond and C. B. Upton, The Life and Letters of James Martineau, 2.Vols., (London, 1902), II, 270.

106. James Martineau, 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', in Unitarianism Defended, p. 46.

107. Charles Wicksteed, The Theological Review, vol. 14 (1877), pp. 88-90.

slightest indication that he joined in the revelry; for him confrontation was on the plane of ideas and as such he never wished to cause personal injury or embarrassment.

The second incident concerned Thomas Byrth, Rector of Wallasey, who was deeply upset by Martineau's attack on the work of Archbishop Magee. In an effort to show that the Improved Version of the Bible had no standing among Unitarians, Martineau maintained, in his first lecture, that Fielding Ould and his colleagues had taken their criticism of the Improved Version from Archbishop Magee, who in turn had borrowed it from Professor Nares of Oxford, who in his turn had taken it from a Unitarian work, Lant Carpenter's critical review in the Monthly Repository of 1809. Martineau moreover complained that Archbishop Magee had added to the criticism a 'mass of abuse' and 'misrepresentations'. (108) When Martineau later substantiated his claim in the notes to his third lecture, (109) Thomas Byrth accepted it, and a friendly correspondence continued between the two men long after the controversy was over, with Byrth presenting a fine copy of the Greek New Testament to Martineau. (110)

Although pleased with his own lectures, Martineau, in the aftermath of the confrontation, was generally silent about it; his 'Biographical Memoranda' made little more than a passing comment on the controversy. This was indicative of his sympathy with others and his desire not to allow theological and philosophical controversy to effect personal relationships.

This attitude can again clearly be seen in his later debates with Spencer, Tyndall and Sidgwick, with whom he remained on good terms, and with the latter two, in close friendship.

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108. 'The Bible; What it is, and What it is not', p. 16.

109. James Martineau, 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with Itself, and with the Christian Idea of Salvation', in Unitarianism Defended, pp. 85-95.

110. James Drummond and C. B. Upton, The Life and Letters of James Martineau, pp. 105-6.



## The Influence of Kant on Martineau

In 1840 Martineau's religious thought underwent a dramatic change. His dissatisfaction with necessarian philosophy was brought to a head by his part-time appointment to the staff of Manchester New College, where the need to prepare and deliver lectures compelled him to harmonise the different movements of thought which had been developing in his mind since his arrival in Liverpool. He recorded in his 'Biographical Memoranda':

I resumed the systematic study of philosophic literature, and thought out anew the problems which I had to treat. The change of view was very inconvenient to me. Almost everything I had written became worthless in my eyes: courses of lectures elaborately prepared for repeated use were laid upon the shelf for ever: the familiar text books could no longer be used in that capacity in my private classes: and every subject had to be melted down again in my own mind and be recast in other moulds. For all this there was ample compensation, in the sense of inward deliverance which I seemed to gain from artificial systems into natural speech. It was an escape from a logical cage into the open air.

It was in the philosophy of Kant that Martineau found the intellectual framework which enabled him to achieve this. Abandoning his discipleship to Priestley and Hartley, Martineau compiled a lecture scheme which combined the critical reasoning of Kant with English empirical philosophy. Although he subsequently modified this approach by drawing on a wider variety of ideas, notably those of Plato, Aristotle and the Scottish Philosophers, he never gave up his adherence to some of the major insights of Kant's teaching.

The influence of Kant on Martineau's work can be traced from this time onwards in his sermons, articles, essays and books. In The Study of Religion (1888) for example, there are some sixty references to Kant, several of which are elaborate treatments of Kant's major ideas, such as his views on free will. Further evidence of Martineau's wide reading of Kant is found in Types of Ethical Theory (1885) where Martineau explains that he omitted to expound Kant's theory of ethics because it was too similar to his own:

It is scarcely less a surprise to myself than it can be to my readers, that no pages in this book have been reserved for Kant. The reason, paradoxical as it may seem, is found, not in any slight of his ethical theory, but in an approximate adoption of it. (111)

His sabbatical leave in Germany during 1848-49 served to reinforce the impact of Kant upon his thinking. He recalled how he had used the time to study the works of Hegel and Plato, and that the former, although a valuable discipline in itself, gave him no new insights, 'but rather threw me back upon the position of Kant.' (112)

The immediate influence of Kant's thought on Martineau in 1840 can be traced in an article entitled Five Points of Christian Faith (1841), which contains several striking resemblances to ideas propounded by Kant in his Critique of Practical Reason, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone and Lectures on Philosophical Theology. These involve the concepts of duty; of God being the highest goodness and intelligence that can be conceived by man; and belief in immortality.

In the writings of both Kant and Martineau there is a concentration on the idea of duty as coming from God and being a means of bringing the individual into harmony with the will of God. In his Critique of Practical Reason Kant wrote:

Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands ... they must be regarded as commands of the Supreme Being because we can hope for the highest good only from a morally perfect and omnipotent will; and therefore, we can hope to attain it only through harmony with this will. (113)

A similar exaltation of duty as a key factor of Christianity is found in Martineau's Five Points of Christian Faith:

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111. James Martineau, Types of Ethical Theory, 2 vols. (London, 1889), II, 566.

112. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

113. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, translated by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis, 1978), p. 34.

The aspirations of duty, the love of excellence, the disinterested and holy affections, of which every good heart is conscious, constitutes our affinity with Him, by which we know Him, as like knows like .. (114)

Martineau had previously found the notion of duty in the writings of Hartley, Priestley and Channing, so that Kant's emphasis upon duty would be no new discovery for him. However, it does seem quite probable that the reading of Kant at this time served to reinforce its importance.

Martineau's article further reveals that he and Kant were at one in regarding God as the highest and most perfect being which could be conceived by man. In a passage which closely resembled the ideas propounded in Kant's Lectures on Philosophical Theology, (115) Martineau wrote: 'to every man his God is his best and highest, the embodiment of that which the believer himself conceives to be his greatest.' (116)

Martineau followed Kant in stressing the immortality of the soul. Kant argued for immortality on the grounds that it was the duty of all human beings to strive for perfection, which could not be achieved immediately but could only be found in endless progress. This infinite progress was only possible on the assumption of an infinite duration. 'Thus the highest good is practically possible only on the pre-supposition of the immortality of the soul.' (117)

Martineau took this theory of Kant's, that immortality is an imperative for future moral development, and added to it three important elements: the teaching of Jesus, the character of the human soul portrayed by Jesus, and the nature of retribution and restoration. He maintained in the first place that immortality of the soul could be believed solely on the basis of the teaching of Jesus. Secondly, he held that Christ's life

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114. Studies of Christianity, p. 192.

115. Immanuel Kant, Lectures on Philosophical Theology , translated by Allen W. Wood and Gertrude Clark (Ithaca and London, 1978), p. 29.

116. Studies of Christianity, p. 185.

117. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, p. 127.

gave a picture of the human soul as being 'so grand' and 'so divine' that it must be immortal. Thirdly, he taught that retribution served no other purpose than that of helping the individual towards the goal of perfection.

Thus if one believed in retribution in and after this life, one also needed to believe in the continuation of the soul in order to benefit from it. Martineau summed up his teaching on immortality in the following words:

A universal Immortality after the model of Christ's heavenly life; an immortality not of capricious and select salvation, with unimaginable torment as the general lot, but, for all, a life of spiritual development, of retribution, of restoration. (118)

There were also other points of similarity between the thought of Martineau and that of Kant. Both held that the teleological argument deserved to be treated with respect and could be an important confirmation of belief in God, which had been independently gained. But Martineau, like Kant, considered that the teleological argument on its own was not competent to establish anything more than an infinitely intellectual being. (119) His major criticism of the argument was its inability to verify the 'warmer attributes' of God. Martineau also shared with Kant the view that the doctrines of the Church must be carefully scrutinised and the distinction drawn between what was essential and what was inessential in doctrine. By this distinction Kant meant simply that which was true and that which was not true (although he always wished to relate true doctrines to the conduct of the individual).

Let the author of a creed, or a teacher of a church, yea, let everyman, so far as he is inwardly to acknowledge a conviction regarding dogmas as divine revelations, ask himself: Do you really trust yourself to assert the truth of these dogmas in the sight of Him who knows the heart and

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118. Studies of Christianity, p. 198.

119. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p. 231.

at the risk of losing all that is valuable and holy to you? (120)

Martineau urged the same investigation of doctrines, but voiced his criticism of untrue doctrine far more forcefully.

Doctrines which cannot be gravely mentioned without incurring the imputation of cant, - which are distasteful, not chiefly to the vain and careless, but more to the thoughtful and earnest, - which no educated man, unless he be in orders, can defend without loss to his reputation, or attack with any gain to it, - which leave scarce a trace on the fiction, the philosophy, the poetry of the time ... have manifestly lost their living hold upon the minds of men, and are not fit to represent the religion of the extant generation. (121)

As we have seen, Martineau not only borrowed from Kant, but he also developed and added to Kant's ideas. He was, however, very selective in his use of Kantian material and on several major points he disagreed with Kant's conclusions. The most fundamental difference between the two men concerned the doctrine of God, His existence, and whether He could be personally known.

Kant never wished to ascribe personality to God, except in his little-known Opus Posthumum which was published shortly before his death in 1803. His major treatise on moral philosophy and theology The Critique of Practical Reason portrays God simply as a 'postulate' to give life meaning and render a reward in the next life to a person who acts according to his conscience in this life. Martineau interprets Kant's system as representing God as a possible fiction, of the imagination. In 1841 he wrote:

At the opposite pole to this doctrine, which makes the perception of "Reason" a part of the activity of God, lies the system of Kant and Fichte, which represents God as an ideal formation, it may therefore be a fiction - arising from the activity of the "Reason" ... (122)

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120. Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, translated by T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York, 1960), p. 177.

121. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 69.

122. Studies of Christianity, p. 190.

Martineau moreover maintained that Kant's teaching, along with that of many leading philosophers, portrayed a God who was essentially unknowable:

Certainly it is that, except in the incomplete cases of Locke and Berkeley, the result of all these researches into the ultimate laws of thought is to banish into the unknown the essential object of religious belief ... (123)

Over and against this teaching Martineau asserted that God 'is' a reality who is at work in His world, (124) and that he could be known personally by the individual as 'a Mind directly accessible to all other minds.' (125)

Martineau also departed from the teaching of Kant on three important topics: Christ, the Church, and the devotional life. Kant portrayed Christ simply as a moral example of the best and highest that man could attain; a kind of archetypal man representing the individual's moral duty. (126)

Martineau wished to go much further than this and place Christ at the centre of his theism as the one who reveals the very nature of God and the nature of man. In 1841 he wrote:

We conceive that Jesus of Nazareth lived and died, not to persuade the Father, not to appease the Father, not to make a sanguinary purchase from the Father, but simply to "show us the Father", to leave upon the human heart a new, deep vivid impression of what God is in himself, and of what he designs for his creature man; (127)

Kant held that unity between the churches could be achieved if the different communions would translate their doctrines into moral precepts, where the common ground of unity would be found. (128) Over and against

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123. James Martineau, A Study of Religion, second edition, revised, 2 vols. (London, 1900), I, 36.

124. James Martineau, Endeavours after the Christian Life (London, 1892), p. 304.

125. National Duties and other Sermons and Addresses, p. 233.

126. Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, p. 54.

127. Studies of Christianity, p. 193.

128. Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, pp. 132-6.

this emphasis Martineau came to the belief that doctrines constantly change and develop within the Christian Church (changes in doctrinal emphasis had been a characteristic of the Octagon Church of Norwich where Martineau had grown up). He viewed doctrine as something which was transitory and he therefore looked for a basis of unity in an aspect of religion which he considered to be more permanent; and this he located in what he called, 'the conscious sameness of spiritual relations.' (129) By this term, Martineau meant the communion or 'fellowship' which united Christians across the credal divisions and down through the centuries.

The devotional life was a key point of divergence between the two thinkers. Kant could find a place in his system of thought for prayer and mediation only in so far as it was helpful to the individual's moral stance, and in strengthening and encouraging his sense of duty:

Praying thought of as an inner formal service of God and hence as a means of grace, is a superstitious illusion ...  
(130)

For Martineau, with his belief in a personal God who touched the life of the individual, devotion was central to the Christian Faith. In the Preface to Hymns for the Christian Church and Home he defended the place of devotion in the life of the Christian and vigorously attacked the utilitarian approach to worship which he saw simply as making it a means to heighten a person's awareness of moral conduct and sense of duty.

Worship is an attitude which our nature assumes, not for a purpose, but from an emotion ... In opposition to this natural idea of worship stands the Utilitarian, which considers it an "instrumental act"; whether, according to the sacerdotal view, its instrumentality is thought to be mystically efficacious with God; or according to the rationalistic, intelligibly beneficial to man ... But the churches which begin to justify their outward devotion by appeal to this consideration have already lost their inward devoutness; and the individual who, with this notion of self-operation, speaks a prayer, performs an act of

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129. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 405.

130. Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, pp. 182-183.

disciplinary prudence, not of Christian piety, and takes the air of heaven for the sake of exercise, rather than in love of the light and quest of the immensity of God. (131)

Kant made a significant impact on Martineau's thought, both positively in terms of general influence and specific ideas, and negatively because the reading of Kant's work forced Martineau to crystallise his own thought on the issues where he did not agree with the German scholar. In later life Martineau came to look back upon 1840 as the great watershed in his thinking. (It has been suggested that his mode of thought was not settled until his return from Germany in 1849, (132) but the evidence does not seem to support such a conclusion, though Martineau acknowledged the value of his sabbatical leave in Germany. It afforded him freedom for quiet philosophical reflection away from his pastoral duties and teaching responsibilities, as well as the opportunity to familiarise himself with the writing of Plato and Aristotle which widened his spectrum of thought. His basic patterns of thinking were already shaped with his break from necessarian philosophy, as can be seen from his two most popular works produced in the early 1840s, Hymns for the Christian Church and Home and Endeavours after the Christian Life, which contained the kernel of his thinking found in later writings, although greatly enlarged and developed.) Martineau emerged from his study of Kant and his 1840 crisis with a deep awareness of the nature of human experience. He expressed his new understanding in the Preface to the second edition of Endeavours:

The prevalent differences of belief on questions of theology have their secret foundation in different philosophies of religion: and these philosophies are the product of moral experience and self-scrutiny ... Hence, controversies apparently historical cannot be settled by appeal to history alone: nor metaphysical disputes, by metaphysics only; but will ultimately resort for their answers to the sentiments and affections wakened into predominant activity by the literature, teaching, and social conditions of the age ... the feelings of men must

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131. James Martineau, Hymns of the Christian Church and Home (London, 1840), pp. v-vi.

132. Rudolf Metz, A Hundred Years of British Philosophy (London, 1938), p. 209.



be changed in detail, their perceptions be awakened in fresh directions, their tastes be drawn by new admirations, before any reasoning can avail to establish an altered system of religious thought. (133)

It was this insight into the human condition, this stress on the unique awareness and experience of man, accounting for human beliefs and actions in other factors than simply that of reason, which became an important feature of Martineau's writings, sermons and pastoral care, and this gave his work a wide appeal.

#### Coleridge and Martineau

Coleridge and Martineau never met: but in view of Coleridge's influence on the development of theology in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising to discover that his writings had an effect upon much of Martineau's religious thought. As A. Michael Ramsey has observed, 'The importance of Coleridge becomes apparent if we ask what reading could be recommended to a layman in the eighteen-thirties who was looking for some vindication of the reasonableness of Christian belief and found the older method of "evidences" for an external and authoritative revelation no longer satisfying.' (134)

Ramsey is here referring to Coleridge's reaction against the rationalism and deism of the eighteenth century, and against the mechanical philosophy of Hartley. As the foremost religious thinker among the romantic poets, Coleridge subsequently became the embodiment of the Romantic Movement's protest against the materialism and utilitarianism of the early decades of the nineteenth century. Coleridge argued for the primacy of the imagination in religious matters, and the inadequacy of logic: 'If any reflecting mind', he wrote, 'be surprised that the aids of the Divine Spirit should be deeper than our consciousness can reach, it

133. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p. x.

134. A. Michael Ramsey, F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology (Cambridge, 1951), p.14.

must arise from the not having attended sufficiently to the nature and necessary limits of human consciousness.' Coleridge believed in 'Spiritual Religion', although he was acutely conscious of the danger of relying too much on the 'inner light': the centre of his teaching was Holy Scripture, interpreted with imagination and intelligence, and tested against personal experience and the workings of conscience. He regarded Holy Scripture as 'the living educts of the Imagination', as sacred poetry of the highest order; and it was from this Romantic and transcendental, poetic and artistic tradition of Coleridge that Martineau drew much inspiration. (135)

Coleridge and Martineau had several things in common. They both aspired to become Unitarian Ministers; they both abandoned their commitment to Hartley and the necessarian philosophical position; they both came under the powerful influence of Kant; they both studied in Germany and were indebted to German religious and philosophical thought. A comparison of Martineau's writings with those of Coleridge, especially Aids to Reflection and Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, reveals not only a close relationship of ideas, but also in some cases a striking resemblance of terminology. There is however no need to prove systematically the dependence of one upon the other, for Martineau frequently acknowledged his debt to Coleridge. He quoted with approval Coleridge's view of miracles, (136) he used Coleridge's apologetics in defence of real religion, and praised Coleridge's theory of the Church and State which he considered to be vastly superior to that of Thomas Arnold. (137)

In 1856 Martineau wrote to one of his former pupils, Susanna Winkworth, expressing his appreciation of her translation of Tauler, and

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135. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, seventh edition (London, 1854), p.49;  
The Statesman's Manual, in Lay Sermons, edited by R. J. White (London, 1972), p.29.

136. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p. 137.

137. Essays, Reviews and Addresses 4 vols. II. 12, 31.

implying that Coleridge was one of his 'sacred guides', (138) but the most direct evidence of his debt to Coleridge can be found in an important paper entitled 'Personal Influences on Present Theology' (1856). (139) This article is of significance because instead of giving a general treatment of Coleridge's theology, Martineau highlighted Coleridge's central theological position:

Some of the peculiarities of Coleridge most familiar to the theologians, - his tetrads and pentads, his doctrine of the Church and State, his denial of the documentary inspiration of the whole Bible, - we pass by; not from any slighting estimate of their importance as part of the organic whole, but in order to insulate the one character, - of religious Realism, - which is the inner essence of the system itself, and the living seed of its development in the school of Mr. Maurice. (140)

In order to define more clearly this central position of Coleridge, Martineau drew attention to a University Sermon given by J. H. Newman, in which Newman contrasted his own thought with that of Coleridge. (141) Newman observed that there were major characteristics of religion which he and Coleridge held in common: they agreed in locating the function of belief in the conscience; in recognising the religious nature of morality; and in making faith prior to knowledge. Martineau made the point that underlying these broad similarities there were subtle differences between Newman and Coleridge that were important. Newman portrayed the moral feeling as instinctive and to be accepted without question, whereas Coleridge saw it as a cognitive power which all men possessed. Moreover,

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138. Margaret J. Shaen, Memorials of Two Sisters: Susanna and Catherine Winkworth (London, 1908), p. 164.

139. It was to this article that David Pym referred in The Religious Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, when he noted that Martineau along with five other mid-Victorian theologians had published tributes to Coleridge which had helped to arouse interest in Coleridge as a theologian.

140. James Martineau, Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 258. Martineau maintained that the inner essence of Coleridge's system which Maurice developed was the identification of the intimations of human moral reason with the indwelling life of the Divine Word. Ibid, I. 259.

141. James Martineau, Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 253.

Newman perceived no other spring of divine knowledge, within the life of the individual, other than that of conscience working in the moral sphere, whereas Coleridge allowed that divine knowledge comes not only through the moral perceptions but also through the intellectual faculty. On both these issues Martineau stood with Coleridge.

Martineau then proceeded in the article to discuss three major components of Coleridge's philosophical theology. Firstly, he shared with Coleridge the conception of duty (a concept which Coleridge in his turn took from Hartley and the eighteenth-century thinkers e.g. Hartley's book was entitled Observations on Man, his Frame, Duty, and Expectations). In Martineau's words it was:

a good other than the sentient, of an authority transcending all personal preferences, of a right over us and our whole cargo of "happiness", actual and potential, that the sense of Duty and the conditions of morality begin. (142)

And it is this practical reason of conscience that reveals the Holy God. Secondly, Martineau argued that for Coleridge there was no such thing as 'natural religion', for all religion was both 'spiritual', springing exclusively from the supernatural element within us; and 'revealed', in so far as the primary ideas of conscience are not our own but given by God.

All that we inadequately call our ideas, the gleaming lights of good that visit us, the hopes that lift again our fallen wills, the beauty which Art cannot represent, the holiness which life does not realize, the love which cannot die with death, - what are they? Not our higher, but a higher than we - the living Guide Himself, pleading with us and asking for our trust. (143)

This shows Martineau sharing Coleridge's transcendentalist philosophy, which uses the imagination to see a spiritual reality, a higher reality than the material or ordinary.

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142. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 254-55.

143. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 260.

Thirdly, Martineau submitted that 'freedom of the will' was an important facet of Coleridge's theology; for it distinguished a person from a thing and was a basic factor for morality. (144) It was the lack of free will in the systems of Priestley and Paley which caused Coleridge to argue against them, maintaining that they portrayed a Universe which excluded moral qualities. The same consideration applied to Coleridge's rejection of the Calvinistic doctrines, which turn man into an object and deny to God any moral attributes. (145)

Martineau summarised what he considered to be the importance of Coleridge's religious thought in words which could be equally applied to his own theology:

The great strength of this school lies, we think, in its faithful interpretation of what is at once deepest and highest in the religious consciousness of men; and its recognition, in this consciousness of a living Divine person, instead of mere abstractions without authority, or the dreams of unreliable imagination. (146)

The influence of Coleridge upon Martineau is reflected in their agreement upon these central principles of the Christian faith, but may also be detected in other striking similarities of thought, which I shall look at, especially on the development of doctrine, the spiritualizing of Christianity, the theory of morals, the approach to the Bible and in general observations.

Martineau was indebted both to Coleridge and Newman for his ideas on the development of doctrine, although his early work on the subject was written before Newman's Development of Doctrine was published, and probably owes its origin solely to the impetus which he derived from Coleridge. As Stephen Prickett has written:

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144. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 254.

145. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 258.

146. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 263.

Central to Coleridge's idea of Biblical method is his sense of doctrine and belief as a living, changing, evolving process, constantly offering new perspectives and making new connections. (147)

Martineau followed Coleridge in this idea of organic and living religion, subject to change and development, and as early as 1839 set out his own theory:

We are warned that "the Bible is not a shifting, mutable uncertain thing." We echo the warning, with this addition, that Christianity is a progressive thing; not a doctrine dead, and embalmed in creeds, but a spirit living and impersonated in Christ. Two things are necessary to a revelation: its record, which is permanent; its readers, who perpetually change. For the collision of the lesson and the mind on which it drops, starts up the living religion that saves the soul within, and acts on the theatre of the world without. (148)

In 1840 Martineau cited Watts' alteration of the Jewish terminology in the Psalms in order to Christianize it, and on the basis of that precedent claimed the right to amend the hymns of Watts in order to bring them into harmony with contemporary doctrines. Martineau held the view, as did Schleiermacher, (149) that doctrines are altered to express, in terms more

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147. Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church (Cambridge, 1976), p.54.

148. 'The Bible: what it is and what it is not', p.43.

149. James Martineau, Hymns for the Christian Church and Home (London, 1840), p.x.

It might at first appear that Martineau was greatly influenced by the theology of Schleiermacher, and certainly there are echoes of the German theologian in much of Martineau's work. Martineau's assumption that 'in the human soul there was provision for an immediate apprehension of God.' (Seat of Authority, p.718) is similar to Schleiermacher's 'God-consciousness'. Martineau's Christology carries the imprint of Schleiermacher's thought. However I have not devoted a section to the general influence of Schleiermacher on Martineau, as there is little direct evidence in Martineau's own writings to support a theory that his theology was modelled on that of the great German; indeed in his three major systematic works there is only one comment on any aspect of Schleiermacher's theology, and this is concerned with Martineau disassociating himself from Schleiermacher's pantheistic view of immortality (Study of Religion, II, 335-42.). Martineau also criticises Schleiermacher's principle of 'God-consciousness' for not leading to faith in a personal God, but instead identifying the essence of Christianity with an 'intellectual and aesthetic mysticism'. (letter to Catherine Winkworth, February 2nd. 1883.)

readily understood by each succeeding generation, the religious spirit which lies behind the doctrines. Thus the constant factor is not the doctrine but the religious spirit which it expresses:

In truth, the dogmatic phraseology and conceptions of every church constitute the mere dialect in which its religious spirit is expressed, and to change the technical modes of thought peculiar to any portion of Christendom into a different or more comprehensive language, is but to translate the intellectual idioms of one religious province into those of another. (150)

By 1853 Martineau was commending the Roman Catholic concept of a 'continuous thread of Divine Inspiration' which crossed the centuries and presented doctrines as maturing with time. (151) However perhaps his most succinct exposition of his theory of the development of doctrine is found in a paper entitled 'The Living Church through Changing Creeds', written against fellow Unitarians who failed to recognise this continuous process of change, growth, and development of doctrine in the life of their own Churches. (152)

Martineau shared with Coleridge the desire to spiritualize the Christian faith. Coleridge's life's work, according to Julius Hare, was:

to spiritualize, not only our philosophy but our theology,  
to raise them both above the empiricism into which they had  
long been dwindling ... (153)

Martineau led a new movement within Unitarianism which similarly strove to emphasise the spiritual nature of the Christian life and faith. He held

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150. James Martineau, Hymns of the Christian Church and Home (London, 1840), p.x.

See Coleridge on the Trinity - 'an absolute truth transcends any human means of understanding it or demonstrating it...' Table Talk, April 13th. 1830.

151. Studies of Christianity , p.233.

152. James Martineau, 'The Living Church Through Changing Creeds', The Theological Review Vol. 3. (1866), pp. 296-306.

153. Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion, p.67.

the conviction that 'there is in us that which is above the natural life, and apprehends what lies beyond it.' (154)

Thus the Christian faith for Martineau was not only believing in a Creator and living a moral life, but included the conviction that beyond the visible material world was the spiritual and that the spirit of man could commune with God as Spirit. He expressed this in a sermon on 'The Offering of Art to Worship', where he discussed the communion between the human spirit and the Divine spirit which he found most complete in the context of worship.

We, ...., are not simply parts of nature, but possessed, like him, of faculties above it; within it, yet beyond it; able to seize the meaning he puts into it, and so to mould it as to give back a responsive meaning of our own, And it is precisely on this middle ground, neither helpless mind nor empty matter, but mind weilding matter and making it pliant to the inner conception and transparent to the coloured lights and shades of Love, that the two spiritual natures, finite and infinite, must meet in their communion.(155)

Martineau also followed Coleridge in his theory of morals. One of the important questions for ethics in the Victorian era was whether the motives of the moral agent, or the actions performed by the moral agent, were central to moral philosophy. On this question Martineau, like Coleridge, affirmed motive to be paramount, against Whitwell and Sidgwick who held the opposite view. It has been suggested that Sidgwick's obsession with Martineau was probably due to the fact that Martineau offered the only serious philosophical attempt in Britain since Coleridge to assert the pre-eminence of motive over action in morality. (156)

Their approaches to the Bible show a striking affinity of thought. In 1825, when referring to the Bible, Coleridge said, 'I take up this work

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154. Essays, Reviews and Address, IV, 579.

155. James Martineau, Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, 2 vols. (1876 & 1879, London), II, 344.

156. J. B. Schneewind, Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy (Oxford, 1977), p.247.



with the purpose to read it for the first time as I should read any other work'. (157) Compare this with Martineau, writing sixteen years later: 'in interpreting these Scriptures, we follow the same rules which should apply to any other books ...' (158)

The resemblance of thought between the two men was not just limited to doctrinal issues, but also extended to general observations. Coleridge, for example, had asserted that almost all errors could be attributed to 'truths misunderstood ... half truths taken as the whole'. (159) This was an idea which Martineau used to great effect in his own sermons; (160) he began his sermon on 'Great Principles and Small Duties', with words remarkably similar to those of Coleridge, 'Every fiction that has ever laid strong hold on human belief is a mistaken image of some great truth.' (161)

I have not attempted to prove that Coleridge influenced Martineau, but have accepted Martineau's own confession that Coleridge was one of his 'sacred guides', and in the light of that disclosure I have outlined the affinity of thought between the two men. However, not all the similarities in their thinking can be attributed to the influence of Coleridge upon Martineau. Their views of scriptural inspiration for example closely resemble each other, but Coleridge's view did not shape Martineau's interpretation which was set down some four years before Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit was published posthumously in 1840.

It must also be remembered that both men drew extensively from Kant as

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157. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, Bohn's edition (London, 1913), p.294.

158. Studies of Christianity, p.199.

159. Mill on Bentham and Coleridge, with an introduction by F. R. Leavis (London, 1959) p.161.

160. Henry Crabb Robinson, Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence, ed. T. Sadler, 3 Vols. (London, 1869), III, 230.

161. James Martineau, Endeavours after a Christian Life, ninth edition (London, 1892), p.23.

a common source, and both shared a Unitarian background; from this period in his life Coleridge must have retained something, notably his strong sense of duty. Thus any accusation of plagiarism directed against Martineau must be treated with suspicion. In the same way as Coleridge seized the ideas of Kant and made them his own, so Martineau was selective in what he took from Coleridge, appropriating only that which he could weave into his own consistent philosophical theology. His deviation from Coleridge's view of original sin illustrates this selectivity. Coleridge perceived of sin in terms of a deliberate divorcing of one's will from the will of God, with the consequential rejection of the true law of one's being in order to wallow in natural appetites. Original sin was a life lived solely on the plane of sense gratification: it should not be blamed on Adam as it was not an hereditary disorder, resulting from Adam's transgression and passed down through the generations; but rather Adam was the representative of all men, so that in his fall was mirrored the fall of every person.

Even in Genesis the word Adam is distinguished from a proper name by an Article before it. It is the Adam, so as to express the genus, not the individual - or rather, perhaps, I should say, as well as the individual. (162)

Coleridge portrayed original sin more in terms of a disease which all men have rather than as an hereditary defect originating in the first man. This disease had its origins not in an ancestor, for that would be unjust, but somehow in the human will. Barth comments that the strength of Coleridge's doctrine of original sin lay in his recognition of the communal nature of sin in that it is due not simply to an original parent, but somehow to all men. (163) Coleridge in no sense saw himself as flying in the face of traditional Christian doctrine, and in Aids to Reflection

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162. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, p.174.

163. Robert J. Barth, Coleridge and Christian Doctrine (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969), p.125.

wrote:

where Private Interpretation is everything and the Church is nothing - there the mystery of Original Sin will be either rejected, or evaded, or perverted into the monstrous fiction of Hereditary Sin (164)

Martineau also had a clear concept of sin which he defined as 'the conscious free choice of the worse in the presence of a better no less possible'. (165) This was closely linked to Coleridge's concept of sin being the deliberate divorce of one's own will from the will of God, as Martineau believed that all the impulses to choose the highest came from God. Martineau was at one with Coleridge in his locating of sin in the human will, (166) and in his opposition to the idea of a personal devil. (167)

However he went beyond Coleridge's liberal interpretation of original sin and by 1839 had rejected the doctrine altogether. In so doing he was following a tradition found within English Presbyterianism since the middle of the previous century when Dr. John Taylor, the Minister of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, and first Principal of the Warrington Academy, had given up adherence to this doctrine. (168) Martineau dismissed the doctrine of original sin for three major reasons. Firstly he saw it as a denial of free will, which consequently undermined the very basis of morality. (169) Secondly he argued against the doctrine of original sin on the grounds of the personal origin and personal identity of sin. (170) He maintained that

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164. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Aids to Reflection, pp. 199-200.

165. Studies of Christianity, p.470.

166. James Martineau, 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', in Unitarianism Defended, p.34.

167. 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', p.30.

168. Taylor's Scriptural Doctrine of Original Sin (1740) had a wide circulation in England, Scotland and America.

169. Studies of Christianity, p.471.

170. 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', p.35.  
Studies of Christianity, p.468.

sin and guilt could not be transferred, logically or morally, from a person in the distant past to those living in the present. (171) Thirdly he opposed the idea of original sin on the basis of scripture, arguing that neither in the Mosaic or the Christian dispensation was there any doctrinal solution to the problem of the origin of evil. (172)

Thus while Coleridge tried hard to maintain a doctrine of original sin, even if an unorthodox one, Martineau found the doctrine to be incompatible with freedom, morality, duty and scripture. He was unwilling to wrestle with the paradox of original sin and free will, which Coleridge attempted to hold together.

Martineau shared with Coleridge the desire simultaneously to achieve two things: 'to preserve the possibility of rational belief in God who was both supernatural and transcendent and ... to subject such a belief to the full investigation of the educated mind.' (173) Like Maurice and Newman he carried on a particular strain of Coleridge's theology through the nineteenth century. This aspect of thought which centred on the living God being discerned in the spirit and conscience of man, when refined and developed, enabled him to meet the challenges of Spencer, Tyndall and Sidgwick in the second half of the century. Against Spencer he argued that God could be known, against Tyndall he fought for the existence of an intellectual aspect in religion and for the creative activity of God, and against Sidgwick he advocated the priority of motive over action in morality.

Stephen Prickett makes the discerning comment that for Carlyle, 'Coleridge was a highly intelligent and rational thinker who had abandoned rationality and retreated into Kantian mumbo-jumbo', and for Newman

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171. Studies of Christianity, p.474  
'The Christian View of Moral Evil', p.36.

172. 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', p.15.

173. Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion, p.69.

'Coleridge was a religious and poetic genius whose speculative intellect had led him into barren wastes of liberal thought and infidelity.' (174)  
But for Martineau, Coleridge was one of the three great 'influences on present theology' who had set in motion a movement which had 'more future' than any other theology of the time. (175)

#### Manchester College

It was while on the staff of Manchester College that Martineau formed a life-long friendship with Francis Newman, the gifted brother of John Henry Newman. A bundle of letters written from Newman to Martineau survives in Manchester College Library and presents us with an insight into their close friendship. They deal with Victorian life in general, as well as presenting Martineau with penetrating and searching questions about his theology and especially his devotion to Christ.

During his remaining seventeen years in Liverpool he wrote some forty-five major articles, contributing to several nineteenth century journals, as well as producing his outstanding collection of sermons, Endeavours after the Christian Life. This was a popular and influential work both within and outside Unitarianism, and by 1892 it had gone into nine editions. Martineau was ministering continuously to his congregation, apart from a period of eighteen months in 1847-8 when he studied in Germany. He had the Church rebuilt while he was away, replacing the old octagonal shape with a fine Gothic structure, which he felt was more in tune with the spirit of the age. It had elaborate carvings, stained-glass windows, choir pews, and a high altar. The last two were never used, but were there to create the right atmosphere.

In 1853 Manchester College moved to London, but by then the railways had arrived, bringing London within six hours of Liverpool; Martineau was able to keep his post at the College, travelling up to London two days a

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174. Stephen Pricket, Romanticism and Religion, p.69.

175. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 265.

fortnight to lecture, and still having time to carry out his ministerial duties in Liverpool. In 1857 he joined the full-time staff of the College, which since the departure of Francis Newman as Professor of Classics had changed character, in that it no longer tried to supply a complete system of University education but had become more of a theological school in association with University College, London. He remained in London for the rest of his working life, first as Professor and later as Principal of Manchester College. On his retirement he published his major works: Types of Ethical Theory, A Study of Religion, A Study of Spinoza, and The Seat of Authority in Religion. These were in part the results of his three-year cycle of lectures.

### Controversies

Martineau disliked controversy and often felt himself badly equipped for it; but he was drawn into controversy, and even seemed to attract it and create it. His importance for nineteenth-century Christian thought can be seen more in his sermons and controversies than in his later systematic writings. Of the many controversies in which he engaged, four stand out as being of major importance: they were his controversy with Spencer on Agnosticism, with Tyndall on Materialism, with Sidgwick on Ethics, and with MacDonald of Chester on the Church. Of these four, the controversy with Sidgwick need only be briefly outlined as it has already been fully discussed by J.B. Schneewind in Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy and the controversy with MacDonald will be omitted here as it will receive a detailed treatment in the section on the Church.

### The Controversy with Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer was the most famous philosopher of the nineteenth century to develop the evolutionary theory. He held that evolution proceeded from the simple to the complex, and that progress was not an accident or the work of a great Architect, but simply a necessity. He recognised the existence of what he called the 'Unknowable', and maintained that by definition nothing could be known about it. D. C. Somervell held

that Spencer was read widely by the intellectual general public of the day, but was not studied in the Universities, where he was despised. (176)

An indication of the seriousness with which Spencer was taken, and the strength of the opposition he aroused, can be seen from his 'Replies to Criticisms' of his First Principles, where he attempts to deal with the adverse criticism from Principal Caird, Dr. Mansel, Dr. Hodgson, Professor Max Muller, Mr. Henry Sidgwick and James Martineau whom he saw as an 'able metaphysician' and one of his most effective critics. (177)

In 1862 Herbert Spencer published his First Principles, which was the opening section of his colossal five part work on Synthetic Philosophy. In October of the same year Martineau wrote an article for the National Review under the title, 'Science, Nescience and Faith' which was chiefly a criticism of Spencer's work. This essay provided one of the best apologies of the nineteenth century for the theistic position. It is a masterly paper in which the author uses a wide variety of methods in pursuit of his argument: irony, detailed analysis, reductio ad absurdum and rhetoric; each one being appropriately chosen to fit the situation.

At the beginning of his article Martineau maintained that Spencer was not a disinterested philosopher but actually started from the a priori assumption that it was impossible to cross the confines of phenomena and on the basis of this conviction attempted 'to prove that the human mind has no organ for cognizance of the Supreme Cause.' (178)

Spencer's work raised a vital question for Martineau as to whether it was really possible for the intellect to get behind the natural order to the Infinite Cause. As a basis of any such investigation Martineau clearly defined the areas of operation for both science and religion. He held that

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176. D. C. Somervell, English Thought in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1929), p.137.

177. Herbert Spencer, Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative, third edition (London and Edinburgh, 1878), pp. 290-1.

178. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 187.

science disclosed the method of how the world was made and that religion disclosed its cause. (179) Martineau held that when science or religion overstepped the other's boundary it had moved into an area where it was not qualified to speak:

But if, on the strength of this right it (Science) goes on to say, "these ways of nature are all in all, and behind them there is nought for man to apprehend," it usurps a function not its own, and affirms that which lies not less beyond its competency than was the Newtonian astronomy beyond that of the Hebrew cosmogonist. (180)

He went on to assert that on this basis atheism could not come from an increase in knowledge about the physical universe, for 'the more we discover, the more phenomena will there be crying out for their cause.'

(181) Martineau then made four major criticisms of Spencer.

Martineau argued that the theist, the atheist and the pantheist all agreed that the problem of whether there is a Supreme Being behind the world is worthy of serious consideration, and that all three embark on such an investigation in the belief that a result is possible. 'Without the assumption that knowledge is possible, the very attitude of the quest is impossible.' (182) Martineau attacked Spencer on the grounds that the positivist and theistic positions are both understandable, but that Spencer's intermediate position (that there was a first cause which cannot be known) is the least tenable of all possibilities:

We can understand the Positivist with whom laws are ultimate, and who turns causation out of the doors into metaphysical night. We can understand the Theist, who says

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179. Essays, Reviews and Address, III, 190.  
Although Martineau probably derived this distinction from Coleridge, it is of interest to note that this was precisely the position adopted by the American Academy of Science in 1965.
180. Essays, Reviews and Address, III, 192.
181. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 193.
182. Essays, Reviews and Address, III, 194.



that, on whatever ground you know the First Cause to exist, on the same ground you know that Cause to be a free Mind. But we cannot understand the intermediate position, which allows a field to Ontology, but condemns it to perpetual barrenness. (183)

Martineau criticised Spencer for maintaining that to affirm anything about the Infinite was to introduce boundaries and to close doors on other possibilities. According to Martineau, Spencer was asking, 'How... can the Infinite be the object of thought? To think is mentally to predicate: to predicate is to limit: so that under this process, the Infinite becomes finite: and to know it is to destroy it.' (184) Martineau affirmed that to remain consistent in this process, no predicate not even that of existence could be attributed to the Infinite. Martineau held that to maintain the Infinite exists but is totally unknowable is a contradiction in terms. He thus summed up his argument on this point:

The denial, for all minds, of any possible knowledge of God, is tantamount to the denial, for him, of real being ... Mr. Spencer must, it strikes us, concede either more to ontology or less; either fall back on the maxim, "All we know is phenomena"; or go forward from his assurance, that the Infinite Cause is, to admit some possible apprehension of what it is. (185)

A further inconsistency which Martineau perceived in Spencer's argument was that, having claimed that nothing could be known about the Being of God, Spencer then went on to make several statements about such a Being; that it was 'Omnipresent', that it was 'positive though indefinite', and that it was 'an ultimate Omnipotent Reality'. (186)

Martineau's final assault on First Principles concerned Spencer's assertion that it was impossible to conceive of any self-existent thing because such a concept implied an infinite past time which was an idea that

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183. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 212.

184. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 199.

185. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 200.

186. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 206

no mind could contain. Against this, Martineau held that it was quite possible for a rational mind to conceive of an infinite and he illustrated his assumption by a reference to mathematics which constantly used the idea of the infinite. Moreover, Martineau argued that in the same way as space and time could be conceived as infinite so also could causality.

Time with its one dimension, Space with its three, we are compelled to regard as Infinite; not in the mere subjective sense, that our thought of them suffers no arrest; but in the objective sense, that they in themselves can have no beginning or end. (187)

Behind Martineau's criticism lay a deep feeling that if Spencer's philosophical system was not refuted it could undermine the basis of Christian worship. At the end of his article Martineau pointed out that Spencer's approach denied any communication between the Divine and the human in terms of thought or conscience or affection and left no possibility of communication of the living God with living souls. Although Martineau acknowledged that Spencer had preserved the mystery of religion (which he, Martineau, had so vigorously contended for in the Liverpool Controversy), Martineau also maintained that a religion could not be constituted out of mystery alone. (188)

It took Spencer ten years to publish a reply to Martineau's criticisms; his rejoinder, which eventually appeared in December 1873 in the Fortnightly Review, turned out to be very superficial. He challenged Martineau on three points.

Firstly, he took up Martineau's criticism that if the Absolute was present in thought only as a negative, then the relationship between it and the non-absolute became unthinkable. (189) In order to meet this criticism Spencer redefined his terms by asserting that the Absolute was a vague

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187. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 203.

188. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 217.

189. Herbert Spencer, Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative, 3 vols. (London, 1878) III, 291.

concept which could be present as a consciousness, undefined and positive. Moreover Spencer proceeded to argue that because the Absolute transcended thought, it was impossible to apply modes of thought to it.

In brief then, to Mr. Martineau's objection I reply, that the insoluble difficulties he indicates arise here, as elsewhere, when thought is applied to that which transcends the sphere of thought. (190)

Spencer's assertion that God cannot be thought of because he goes beyond the laws of thought, does not appear to be a very satisfactory answer.

The second argument Spencer levels at Martineau seems equally weak. Spencer maintained that if Martineau's system was followed to its logical conclusion, it would simply result in a perpetual continuation of the world, which would leave no room for the activity of God:

Consistently carried out, his argument implies a universally- inevitable order, in which volition can have no such place as that he alleges. (191)

It is not easy to see how Spencer arrives at this conclusion, and such a statement does seem to support D. C. Somervell's view that Spencer was difficult to understand. (192) Moreover such a criticism overlooks the fact that Martineau was attempting to answer the formidable question of how God is at work in his world. The answer that Martineau gave is that he is so, as a 'Mind' that can have fellowship with other minds; as the 'presence of Living God with living soul'; 'through the communion of thought' between the Divine and the human (193) and as the Cause of phenomena. (194)

Spencer's third criticism of Martineau was that he failed to give an

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190. Herbert Spencer, Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative, III, 295.

191. Herbert Spencer, Essays, III, 298.

192. D. C. Somervell, English Thought in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1929), p.137.

193. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 217.

194. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 193.

explanation of the origin of Space and Time and possibly even of matter.

Thus Spencer concluded:

If the "Omnipotent Architect himself" (to use Mr. Martineau's somewhat inconsistent name) is powerless to change the "material datum objective" to him, and powerless to change the conditions under which it exists, and under which he works, there is obviously implied a power to which he is subject. So that in Mr. Martineau's doctrine also, there is an Ultimate Unknowable... (195)

It is worth noting that Martineau never actually stated that he believed in eternal matter, but only that he held it to be a possibility, a possibility acknowledged by Aquinas, and in more recent times thoughtfully considered by E. L. Mascall in his book Christian Theology and Natural Science. The conclusion that Spencer drew from Martineau's premise does not stand up to close scrutiny. Because Martineau noted the possibility of eternal matter it does not follow, as Spencer implied, that creation could be traced further back beyond the activity of the Omnipotent Architect, to another source of creativity, the Ultimate Unknowable.

There exists no rejoinder from Martineau to Spencer's reply. This is not surprising, considering that so many years had elapsed since the original article, during which time public interest had moved on. It is also doubtful if Spencer's reply was sufficiently powerful to merit Martineau entering the controversy again. Moreover another controversy had arisen between the two men and this was perhaps the decisive factor which resulted in the termination of the first one.

In the Spring of 1872 Martineau published a lecture entitled, The Place of Mind in Nature and Intuition in Man, which was in part an attack on Spencer's account of evolution. In his Synthetic Systems of Philosophy, Spencer had attempted to give an account of evolution which dispensed with an Infinite Intelligence and Will.

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195. Herbert Spencer, Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative, III, 299.

This debate is of less importance for an assessment of Martineau's thought than that on Science, Nescience and Faith for it revealed little of the shape of Martineau's philosophical theology. On balance Spencer possibly got the better of the scientific arguments, but he seems to have made few inroads into Martineau's basic assumption that behind the evolutionary process, 'Mind is first and rules for ever.' (196) At the centre of this controversy was Martineau's argument that theism was compatible with evolution and Spencer's reply that theism was not necessary to evolution.

Martineau began his article with the assertion that a religious person may hold a view of creation, or construction, or evolution of the universe provided that he or she maintains that behind it there is a Mind which rules the Universe and moves all things towards a desired end. (197) He argued that provided that the concept of the Divine Mind was retained then it did not matter if one theory of how the world came into being was superseded by another. (198)

Martineau acknowledged that evolution could raise doubts in some minds about the nature of religion in two particular areas: in relation to man himself regarding his trust in the intuitions of reason and conscience, and also in respect to the outward universe concerning the question of Design in Nature.

In the former case, it infuses distrust into our self-knowledge, weakens our subjective religion or native faith in the intuitions of thought and conscience, and tempts us to imagine that the higher they are, the further are they from any assured solidity of base. In the latter case, it weakens our objective religion, suggests that there is no originating Mind, and that the divine look of the world is but the latest phase of its finished surface, instead of the incandescence of its inmost heart. (199)

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196. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 586.

197. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 586.

198. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 587.

199. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 588.

What Martineau himself was contending for is that behind beauty, truth and goodness, and behind the pleasing phenomena which point to these is reality and not an illusion; and that behind the material world is the Divine Thought.

In a reference to Spencer's work Martineau maintained that the theory of Evolution had been extended to apply to the whole natural history of the human race. Thus the world was perceived by Spencer as a training school, and the differences which separated man from the other animals were explained by a process of gradual attainment. The experiences which could not be accounted for at the individual level were attributed to collective feelings and a condensing of thought down through the ages.

In an important paragraph Martineau revealed what he considered to be the implications of Spencer's evolutionary theory for religion:

This vast enlargement of the doctrine of Evolution, while increasing its power, and removing it from the reach of accurate tests, alters neither its principle nor its practical effect. It undertakes to exhibit the highest and the greatest in our nature as ulterior phenomena of the lowest and least. And it usually treats as a superstition our natural reverence for the rational, moral and religious intuitions as sources of independent insight and ultimate authority; and, in order to estimate them, translates them back into shorthand expressions of sensible experience and social utility. (200)

Although Martineau held that the evidence for the evolutionary theory was inconclusive, he accepted that a case could be made out in support of it, but strongly maintained that this did not justify the sceptical attitude which the theory so often engendered towards the intellectual, moral and religious intuitions of the human mind.

Martineau criticised Spencer for failing to account for important areas of human experience such as reason and conscience which point to an authority beyond themselves.

For among these functions we present certain Intuitive

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beliefs:- for the Reason, in Divine Causality; for the Conscience, in Divine Authority; together blending into the knowledge of a Supreme and Holy Mind ... If these trusts are indeed the growth of ages, from seed invisibly dropped upon the field of time, be it so; it was not without hand; there was a Sower that went forth to sow. (201)

Martineau moreover argued that atoms unaided could do nothing, and that competition of itself was insufficient to explain the development of man or the world. He illustrated his atomic theory by maintaining that if all the atoms of the world were reduced to the same substance, gold, then there would never be any new life formed by their interaction. (202) It is easy to see the idea behind Martineau's thinking, but his over-simplification of the problem, and his hypothetical case of all the atoms being gold, which they are not, rendered him vulnerable to Spencer's criticism.

In dealing with Spencer's idea of competition in evolution Martineau made three observations. Firstly, that the term competition only describes a certain intensifying of powers already present. Secondly, that competition cannot exist except in the presence of some possibility of a better or worse. Thirdly, before competition can arise there must be a desire or an instinct to lay hold of its opportunities. (203) Thus for Martineau competition can do no more than stimulate what was already present.

At the conclusion of the article Martineau made a judgement which upheld his own theological position:

These considerations ... show the impossibility of dispensing with the presence of Mind in any scene of ascending being, where the little is becoming great, and the dead alive, and the shapeless beautiful, and the sentient moral, and the moral spiritual. (204)

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201. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 595.

202. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 599.

203. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 602, 603.

204. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 606.

A clear account of what happened next can be found in Spencer's Autobiography where he implied that Martineau's criticism did not call for any reply. However public opinion caused him to change his mind:

In the course of an after-dinner conversation at Professor Huxley's, Mr. Martineau's criticisms were referred to, and a remark made by Mr. Knowles:- "The general opinion is that you gentlemen are getting the worst of it." - served its purpose effectually. I forthwith took up Mr. Martineau's gauntlet and suspended other work for an interval. (205)

Spencer made his reply to Martineau in the June edition of the Contemporary Review of 1872 in an article entitled Mr. Martineau on Evolution. The essay took issue on several points that Martineau had only mentioned incidentally: for example, Spencer challenged Martineau's simple chemistry, his assumption that there was a gulf between plant life and animal life, and even Martineau's use of the term 'evolution'. Spencer also distanced himself from Martineau's attack on the idea of competition, by maintaining that it was not essential to the evolutionary theory. However the weight of Spencer's criticism was reserved for Martineau's contention that evolution was caused by Mind:

Clearly, therefore, the proposition that an "originating Mind" is the cause of Evolution is a proposition that can be entertained so long only as no attempt is made to unite in thought its two terms in the alleged relation that it should be accepted as a matter of faith, may be a defensible position, provided good cause is shown why it should be so accepted; but that it should be accepted as a matter of understanding - as a statement making the order of the universe comprehensible - is a quite indefensible position. (206)

Martineau never replied to Spencer's paper. In a letter to Professor William Knight of St. Andrews he explained his reason:

Herbert Spencer's paper in the last number ought perhaps to have some reply: and I have pretty well made up my mind

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205. Herbert Spencer, Autobiography, 2 vols. (London, 1904), II, 245.

206. Herbert Spencer, Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative, III, 249.



what to say. But I am too busy with the winding up of the College Season to work out my defence for the July number: and I doubt whether I shall care enough about it to take it up later. Nothing that Spencer urges has the least effect upon me. Yet in general I am only too easily knocked down, and brought to believe myself demolished. (207)

Martineau had made a mistake with his molecular theory in regard to his over-simplification of reducing everything to 'gold'. However there was much of his formidable case still intact and unrefuted. Three years after Martineau's death Spencer wrote his Autobiography and proclaimed himself the victor, maintaining that 'The refutation of his argument was an easy task.' (208) However some who were able to take a more objective view of the confrontation and who wrote from a theist position tended to award the honours to Martineau. S. C. Carpenter, for example, when writing his Church and People, 1789-1889, said of Martineau, 'He met Spencer and Tyndall on their own ground, and showed that the Monism of one and the Materialism of the other failed to cover all the facts.' (209) The German Philosopher, Otto Pfleiderer also commends Martineau's 'forcible criticism' of Spencer's work. (210)

Although Martineau did not respond to either of Spencer's replies, when he came to write A Study of Religion and Types of Ethical Theory he again took issue with Spencer. In his Types of Ethical Theory Martineau questioned Spencer's assertion that Kant's theory of a priori ideas preceding experience had been refuted by the doctrine of natural evolution, which had shown that these were simply the result of inherited experiences.

Martineau vigorously attacked this hypothesis on the grounds that it would reduce morality merely to pain and pleasure.

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207. Letter from James Martineau to William Knight, dated 15th June, 1872; in Manchester College Library, Oxford.

208. Herbert Spencer, Autobiography, II, 246.

209. S. C. Carpenter, Church and People, 1789-1889 (London, 1933), P. 476.

210. Otto Pfleiderer, The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant, and its progress in Great Britain since 1825 (London & New York, 1909), p.340.

The sum and substance of this comprehensive and ingenious theory is this: that pleasure and pain are what we denote, and all that we denote, by good and evil, and supply to each agent the sole end of conduct. (211)

When Martineau wrote A Study of Religion he again attacked Herbert Spencer's idea of 'the Unknowable'. Martineau held that Spencer's position was untenable because it propounded the view that we could only know 'that' the Absolute Power is, but not 'what' it is. Martineau argued that this was self-contradictory, for 'how can there be a thought with nothing thinkable?' (212) Martineau proceeded to argue that Spencer, by referring to the Unknowable as 'Power', as 'Omnipresent', as 'Eternal', as 'One' and as 'cause manifested in all phenomena' (213) was himself removing the Absolute away from the Unknowable. Moreover Martineau maintained that to distinguish this Absolute from all that was related to it, as Spencer did, was to know it, for to distinguish is to know.

Drummond and Upton wildly overstated their case when they referred to Martineau's controversy with the agnostics, including Spencer:

All these impressive papers prove, I think, conclusively, that the phenomena of nature owe their origin to spiritual activity, and that the right clue to the meaning of all causality is found in our consciousness of volitional Effort. (214)

Martineau did not defeat Spencer in the sense of proving that Spencer was wrong, or that he, Martineau, held the only tenable view. What he did so successfully was to show that neither the agnostic case, nor the case for unaided evolution was proven, for both contained many unexplained elements; and moreover he demonstrated that there were many factors which pointed

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211. James Martineau, Types of Ethical Theory, third edition, 2 vols. (London, 1889), II, 376.

212. James Martineau, A Study of Religion, second edition, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1900), I, 124.

213. A Study of Religion, I, 124..

214. James Drummond and C. B. Upton, The Life and Letters of James Martineau, II, 360.

towards a theistic conclusion.

### Martineau and Tyndall on Materialism

During the last thirty years, modern scholarship has tended to under-emphasise the conflict between religion and science in the nineteenth century. This is in no small part due to the fact that much recent research has been focused on the debate between Huxley and Wilberforce, and has questioned the importance of that controversy:

It is now of course widely acknowledged that as a symbol, the Oxford confrontation is totally misleading, indeed, the so-called conflict of religion and science has largely disappeared under the searching microscope of the historical revisionists. (215)

The true situation is more complex: if the major battle of this conflict was not centred on Huxley and Wilberforce, but on Martineau and Tyndall, then indeed a crucial debate concerning religion and science was taking place. Martineau's campaign was largely defensive and concentrated on two fundamental issues. He argued against matter being self-sufficient, able to create and construct out of its own necessity and thus removing the need for God; and he vigorously opposed religion relinquishing to science the intellectual sphere and thus being confined to the emotional realm of man's nature.

Martineau's controversy with Professor John Tyndall over materialism brought him to the forefront of English theology and philosophy in the 1870s and earned him the reputation of being 'a champion of theism'. (216) There were several reasons for this in addition to the content and strength of Martineau's argument. The eminence of John Tyndall both as a respected scientist and as a famous mountaineer ensured for his critic, Martineau, a wide publicity. Moreover Martineau's two papers in the dispute were not

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215. Sheridan Gilley and Ann Loades, 'Thomas Henry Huxley: The War between Science and Religion', The Journal of Religion, vol. 61, No. 3 (1981), 285.

216. A. S. Eve and C. H. Creasey, Life and Work of John Tyndall (London, 1945), p. 188.

lost in some obscure theological journal, but were printed in the Contemporary Review and thus captured a broad readership in England and America. (217)

Tyndall's own remarks suggest that Martineau's essays were read by many prominent figures in public life: 'my attention had been directed by several estimable, and indeed eminent, persons, to an essay by the Rev. James Martineau, as demanding serious consideration at my hands.' (218) Tyndall's theory of materialism was attacked by the Press, especially the Religious Press (219) and several leading Churchmen of the day, including the Bishop of Manchester and Cardinal Cullen. But his biographers maintain that the 'most able and temperate antagonist was James Martineau.' (220) The general interest that the controversy aroused can be gauged from the two articles contributed to the The Spectator by R. H. Hutton; both of which criticised Tyndall and praised Martineau's work. (221)

The debate between the two men commenced with Tyndall's Presidential Address to the British Association meeting in Belfast on 19th August, 1874.

This speech which was reported in The Times of the following day and subsequently produced as a separate booklet, brought forth an immediate response from Martineau in his address at the Opening of Session of Manchester New College, in October 1874. This was enlarged and published the same month in the Contemporary Review under the title, 'Religion as Affected by Modern Materialism'. The following year in November 1875, the Fortnightly Review carried Tyndall's rejoinder to Martineau, entitled, 'The Rev. James Martineau and the Belfast Address'. The final blow in this

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217. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, sixth edition, 2 vols. (London, 1879), II, 237.

218. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 226.

219. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 204.

220. A. S. Eve and C. H. Creasey, Life and Work of John Tyndall, p.188.

221. R. H. Hutton, 'Mr. Martineau on Materialism' and 'Professor Tyndall on Materialism', in Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought (London, 1899) pp. 71-79 & 80-88.

confrontation was struck by Martineau with his article, 'Modern Materialism: its Attitude Towards Theology', which appeared in the April edition of the Contemporary Review for 1876 and which drew no further reply from Tyndall.

A brief outline of the four papers of the controversy is necessary in order to apprehend the main thrust of the confrontation and its importance.

Tyndall's Belfast Address was a rambling paper which attacked the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and selectively drew ideas from the work of historical philosophers and scientists, which were compatible with his own view of materialism. Tyndall began by discussing the work of Democritus, the fifth century B.C. philosopher, and quoted with approval five of his propositions regarding matter:

1. From Nothing comes Nothing. Nothing that exists can be destroyed. All changes are due to the combination and separation of molecules.
2. Nothing happens by chance; every occurrence has its cause, from which it follows by necessity.
3. The only existing things are the atoms and empty space; all else is mere opinion.
4. The atoms are infinite in number and infinitely various in form; they strike together, and the lateral motions and whirlings which thus arise are the beginnings of worlds.
5. The varieties of all things depend upon the varieties of their atoms, in number, size and aggregation. (222)

Tyndall then referred to Epicurus's attempt to portray nature as pursuing her course in accordance with everlasting laws which needed no interference from the gods. (223) According to Tyndall this theory was developed by Lucretius, some two hundred and fifty years later in the first century B.C., who argued that matter on its own was sufficient to produce the Universe:

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222. John Tyndall, Addresses Delivered Before the British Association Assembled at Belfast (London, 1874), p.4.  
(Hereafter referred to as The Belfast Address)

223. The Belfast Address, p.6.

The mechanical shock of the atoms being in his view the all-sufficient cause of all things, he combats the notion that the constitution of nature has been in any way determined by intelligent design. (224)

Tyndall, who appears to take most of his information on these early philosophers from Lange's History of Materialism, maintained that both Epicurus and Lucretius were writing with the expressed aim of freeing the world from superstition.

He then traced the history of scientific investigation, with particular reference to the theory of atoms, maintaining that the development of scientific progress was arrested by the growth of Christianity, with its other-worldly emphasis and its lack of concern for the material things of this world. (225)

In dealing extensively with Butler's The Analogy of Religion, Tyndall gave an account of the sharp distinction drawn by the Bishop between our real selves and bodily instruments; in so far as limbs may be removed and mortal disease attack the body, yet the mind can remain clear up to the moment of death. Butler argued that, 'our bodies are no more part of ourselves than the matter around us'. (226) Tyndall then exposed what he clearly considered to be a vulnerable point in The Analogy of Religion by inventing a discussion between Butler and an imaginary disciple of Lucretius, who challenged the Bishop's position by putting a question to him:

What if you begin at the other end and remove, instead of a leg, the brain? The body, as before, is divided into two parts; but both are now in the same predicament, and neither can be appealed to to prove that the other is foreign matter. (227)

Tyndall maintained that Butler was a product of his age and that since

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224. The Belfast Address, p.8.

225. The Belfast Address, p.11.

226. The Belfast Address, p.27.

227. The Belfast Address, p.29.

his time great advances had been made in natural science largely because of the labours of Charles Darwin. He argued that Darwin's twenty-two years of study culminated in the rejection of teleology and in the belief in natural selection. Tyndall held that Darwin's research illustrated 'the method of nature, not the technic of a man-like Artificer'. (228)

It was not until the closing pages of his address that Tyndall ceased to expound the work of others and came to the heart of his own theory. He followed the teaching of Lucretius who believed that nature could do all things spontaneously by herself and needed no interference from God, and also of Bruno who held that matter was not a mere empty capacity, but a universal mother who could bring forth her own fruits; (229) Tyndall combined these two thoughts into his own essential thesis:

Believing as I do in the continuity of Nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity, I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial life. (230)

Tyndall admitted to his hearers that the 'materialism' he described may be 'vastly different from what you suppose'. (231) He attributed to matter not only the promise of all life, but also implied that it possessed the potency of basic feelings such as:

Awe, Reverence, Wonder ... the love of the beautiful, physical and moral, in Nature, Poetry, and Art. There is also that deep-set feeling which, since the earliest dawn of history, and probably for ages prior to all history, incorporated itself in the Religions of the world. (232)

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228. The Belfast Address, p.42.

229. The Belfast Address, p.55.

230. The Belfast Address, p.55.

231. The Belfast Address, p.56.

232. The Belfast Address, p.60.

However he was adamant that religion should never be allowed to encroach on the area of knowledge but must be confined to the sphere of the emotions.  
(233)

While admitting that there was a mystery concerning life, the thrust of Tyndall's address was to attribute to matter what many people would attribute to God. This fact, combined with his attack on Plato and Aristotle and his denial of the intellectual field to religion, brought Tyndall into direct conflict with Martineau. Estlin Carpenter writing a quarter of a century after the event, called the Belfast Address a 'brilliant discourse', but this was not a view shared by many of Tyndall's contemporaries of whom his friend, the Jesuit Abbé Moigno may well have been typical. On receiving a copy of the address, he wrote to Tyndall from Paris expressing his concern.

Your heart must be very heavy. "Oh! Tyndall, quae te dementia cepit." Why did you choose this subject? It is not science. The search for origins is forbidden for Science, even by the laws of Positivism. The spectacle of a soul looking for origins which it does not find, and which it will never find, holding on as it does to all innovators, even those which are the least scientific and honourable ... only to prove that the innovator, like the orthodox, arrives at no result. It is a sad spectacle. (234)

Martineau's reply, 'Religion as Affected by Modern Materialism', was a clear statement of his thinking on this topic, and is of historical importance as it was the most effective defence of theism offered in the face of Tyndall's attack. Early in his paper, when outlining the principles upon which his students at Manchester College were being trained, Martineau set out his own theological position so that his comments on Tyndall's Belfast Address could be seen clearly in relief against it. He held that:

the Universe which includes us and folds us round is the

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233. The Belfast Address, p.61.

234. A. S. Eve and C. H. Creasey, Life and Work of John Tyndall, p. 187.



Life-dwelling of an Eternal Mind; that the World of our abode is the scene of a Moral Government incipient but not yet complete; and that the upper zones of Human Affection, above the clouds of self and passion, take us into the sphere of a Divine Communion. (235)

Martineau's general comment on Tyndall's Belfast Address was that it contained many true aspects of scientific investigation which were unfortunately linked together by a questionable philosophy. He attacked Tyndall's formula for ending the conflict between religion and science, which limited religion to the emotional part of man's nature and assigned the intellect to science. Martineau asserted:

no partnership between the physicist and the theologian can be formed on these terms, of assigning the intellect to one and the feelings to the other...(236)

Martineau's own solution to the problem was to reintroduce the distinction he made in his argument with Spencer, which was that of Religion asking the 'Whence' of all phenomena while science asked the 'How'. He qualified this by maintaining that science observed what is happening in the clusters of phenomena while religion asserted that behind those clusters there is a Divine Mind at work. (237)

Martineau believed that religion and science must both bear some responsibility for the present dilemma: the church because it had focused too much on the material of its system and as a consequence had failed to apprehend the inner divine spirit that breathed through the sources of its faith; and science because it assumed that whatever came within the province of nature, was no longer in relation to God. He also argued that science had adopted an old fallacy of religion; that of confusing the idea of the Divine Mind with a miracle worker. Martineau thought that if it could ever be demonstrated that the universe was incompatible with an intelligent Mind, then the doctrine of causality would be shown to be

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235. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 167-8.

236. Essays, Reviews and Address, IV, 168.

237. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 172.

unfounded, but such a result would also destroy the possibility of science, which was dependent upon being able to organise the phenomena of the world into an intelligent scheme. (238) Martineau's major criticism of the Belfast Address was that Tyndall's materialism gave no adequate account for the moral feelings in man. Martineau first posed the question as to whether the ethical result would be the same if atomic development was taken as a substitute for God rather than as his method. He then went on to ask how the moral feelings in man could be accounted for. 'Are they, an influx of Righteousness and Love from the life of the universe?' which he believed them to be, or are they as Tyndall depicted them, simply the 'experiences of utility' and the 'record of ancestral fears'. (239) For the disciple of the materialistic doctrine, the supreme affections had no adequate object, and no corresponding source in the universe. Martineau gave the examples of compassion, self-forgetfulness and a sense of duty, to illustrate how the best in humanity is left unsupported by any reality for the materialists:

On the hypothesis of a Mindless universe, such is the fatal breach between the highest inward life of man and his picture of the outer world. All that is subjectively noblest turns out to be the objectively hollowest; (240)

Martineau maintained that Tyndall's teaching of 'a known materialism and a created God' presented a combination which was rejected both by reason and reverence. He made the counter-claim that the atomic hypothesis was 'a thing not known but created, while God is not created but known.' (241) Martineau concluded his paper by restating his conviction that the conflict between religion and science would not be ended by ascribing reason to one and imagination to the other, in order to keep them from

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238. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 170-73.

239. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 185.

240. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 191.

241. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 194.

quarrelling, but by recognising:

a Duality in the functions of Reason itself, according as it deals with phenomena or their ground, with law or with causality, with material consecution or with moral alternatives. (242)

Tyndall replied to Martineau by producing a rather disjointed article entitled, 'The Revd. James Martineau and the Belfast Address'. It was a paper on which R. H. Hutton made the comment:

Perhaps it is my own fault that the moment Professor Tyndall leaves physical philosophy, and betakes himself to the theologic or metaphysical assumptions which underlie it, I never fail to be bewildered as to what his meaning really is. (243)

Tyndall's paper, which made some probing criticisms of Martineau's position, lost much of its force by seriously misunderstanding some of Martineau's assertions, by only partly quoting sections of Martineau's writings in order to find some common ground with him, and by treating as central issues matters which Martineau had only referred to in passing. Tyndall's misunderstanding of Martineau's paper can be seen by his accusation that 'Mr. Martineau theoretically scorns the emotional.' (244)

A careful reading of Martineau's address reveals that he was not arguing against the presence of emotion in religion, but against the portrayal of Christianity as a pleasant religious feeling which had no correspondence with the truth. 'I trust that when emotion proves empty we shall stamp it out and get rid of it.' (245)

In his attempt to find common ground with Martineau, Tyndall quoted

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242. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 194.

243. R. H. Hutton, Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought, p. 71. This article under the title 'Professor Tyndall on Materialism' is the most thoughtful comment on the debate between Martineau and Tyndall by a contemporary writer.

244. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 233.

245. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 168.

only one aspect of Martineau's demarcation of religion and science: that 'In the investigation of the genetic order of things, Theology is an intruder and must stand aside.' (246) On the strength of this partial quotation Tyndall then asserted that science as understood by himself and theology as represented by Martineau were in harmony on this issue. (247) This, however, was a misrepresentation of theology as portrayed by Martineau, who made the further theological assertion that the phenomena which the scientist described 'are the product of Mind'. (248) He also maintained that science had nothing to say about the originating power of phenomena. (249) Tyndall gave an extensive treatment of Martineau's incidental comments on the nature of scripture, and the responsibility of the Church in the religion and science debate, which were not central to Martineau's criticisms of his Belfast Address. This caused Martineau somewhat wryly to bemoan that 'I should have put so acute a reader upon a totally false scent.' (250)

This paper is of interest in that it enabled Tyndall to re-assert his essential doctrine of materialism. He refused to attribute personality to the power he saw manifested in the universe; he confessed that such terms as 'Cause' or 'Mind' or even the personal pronoun 'He' were too objective to describe the mystery he perceived. (251) He argued that nature being 'red in tooth and claw' was one of the principal factors which negated belief in a 'Beneficent Eternal Mind' operating behind the world. Tyndall reasoned that the 'mean and ugly' character of the world was far more in keeping with Mindless nature. (252)

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246. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 226.

247. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 227.

248. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 172.

249. Essays, Reviews and Addresses

250. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 199.

251. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 232.

252. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 232.

His major criticism of Martineau's position was that the events of nature, such as the formation of a snowflake or the growth of a tree, all appear to happen in the process of nature alone, without any intervening consciousness or mind.

I have glanced at inorganic nature - at the sea, and the sun, and the vapour, and the snowflake, and at organic nature as represented by the fern and the oak. The same sun which warmed the water and liberated the vapour, exerts a subtler power on the nutriment of the tree ... Does consciousness mix in any way with these processes? (253)

Tyndall strongly maintained that the attempt to fit God into this process did not come from the intellect, but was fashioned out of man's interest in this life and his hope for the future life. Thus Tyndall's basic charge against Martineau was that his inference of a Divine Mind was nothing but a feeling for which there was no intellectual defence.

At the conclusion of his paper, Tyndall re-stated his belief that matter on its own is self-sufficient for producing life; a conviction he illustrated with the example of a fertilized egg growing into a foetus, and the foetus growing into a baby. This development of the child, he contended, was simply the process of the fertilized egg drawing what it needed from other forms of matter. (254) R. H. Hutton made the comment on Tyndall's paper:

what Professor Tyndall calls matter, is simply a miracle of harmonious accidents, of happy rhythm in events which no one ever intended to be linked together, of poetic coincidences and convergencies of energies, the rhyme and music in which no one ever preconceived. (255)

In the final essay of the controversy, Modern Materialism; its Attitude Towards Theology, Martineau, after dealing with some minor points, raised several issues against Tyndall. He pointed out that Tyndall's

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253. John Tyndall, Fragments of Science, II, 246.

254. John Tyndall, II, 250.

255. R. H. Hutton, Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought, p. 79.

denial of knowledge and thought to religion, and his subsequent basing of religion on blind feeling, was in effect removing it from its philosophical foundation. (256)

Against Tyndall's assertion that many people find no inner religious experience, Martineau claimed that this did not finally settle the question because the faculty for religious experience had to be trained and developed; failure to cultivate it may prevent a person seeing what is there. (257)

Martineau also dealt with the question of mystery at the centre of life. He maintained that Tyndall could not take refuge in the idea of mystery; for what he had presented was not a mystery but a series of contradictions; in that he had asserted the existence of, 'A power ... which is "immanent" in matter, yet is matter; which "is manifested in the universe," yet is not "a Cause," therefore has no effects ...' (258)

At the heart of Tyndall's materialism Martineau exposed a deficiency. He quoted Tyndall's statement that the utmost the materialist can affirm 'is the association of two classes of phenomena, of whose real bond of union he is in absolute ignorance.' (259) Martineau made the comment that if this was all the materialist could do, he would be better off without his materialism. He then questioned Tyndall's shift from this confession of impotency, to his all-embracing definition of matter: 'Matter I define as that mysterious thing by which all this has been accomplished,' i.e., the whole series of phenomena, from the evaporation of water to self-conscious life of man. Martineau held that this was not a definition at all, but simply Tyndall re-stating his central belief that, 'matter carries in it the promise of all terrestrial life.' Martineau maintained that Tyndall was simply repeating his belief that 'force immanent in

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256. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 203.

257. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 203.

258. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 261.

259. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 205.

matter, is matter'. This according to Martineau, was not a process of reasoning but an act of will. (260)

Martineau argued for his own conviction by repeating Tyndall's question: 'What else is there here but matter?'

I answer, the movements of matter, with their disposing and "formative power," the attracting and repelling energies, which, dealing with molecules and cells, are not molecules and cells ... If in the typical "oak tree" the vitality suddenly ceased, the matter of it would at the next moment still be there, as certainly as that of a clock which had run down: it would weigh the same as before, and so stand the admitted test of the indestructibility of matter. Yet something is gone which was previously there, and that something has to be described otherwise than in terms of "matter". (261)

Martineau concluded his survey of Tyndall's paper by exposing what he considered to be a basic flaw in Tyndall's representation of the conflict between science and religion. Martineau asserted that Tyndall had set his belief in an 'unbroken causal connection', as a direct rival to the 'theologic conception' and maintained that an hour's reason would give the first victory to the former. Martineau held the conviction that victory was impossible because the rivalry was unreal. He maintained that it was quite possible for a 'Mind of illimited resources, - such as "the theologic conception" enthrones in the universe' to 'conduct and maintain "unbroken causal connection".' (262)

Martineau argued that scientific investigation was totally compatible with the idea of Divine Causality, which is re-affirmed by 'the self-conscious hemisphere of inner experience.' (263) An indication of the impact of Martineau's contribution to this controversy can be found in the life of Charles Hargrove who in the 1870s was moving his churchmanship from

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260. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 215.

261. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 259-60.

262. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV. 263-4.

263. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 264.

that of a Jesuit to a Unitarian. From his writings it appears that he followed closely Martineau's debate with Tyndall and was profoundly influenced by Martineau's argument; perhaps it is no mere coincidence that he became a Unitarian shortly after Martineau published his second paper of the dispute. In a lecture on Shakespeare, Hargrove acknowledged his debt to Martineau and extensively quoted from Martineau's first paper of the controversy. (264)

It is not difficult to see why R. H. Hutton designated Martineau as the chief critic of Tyndall's Belfast Address; for although Martineau was writing before Rutherford had split the atom and Einstein and others had shown that matter and energy were interchangeable, his argument still retains much of its cogency today. The work of A. R. Peacocke, for example, in his Creation and the World of Science (1979), is not wholly dissimilar to some of the arguments put forward by Martineau.

#### Martineau and Henry Sidgwick

The ethical teaching of James Martineau has been extensively covered by several writers. In 1894 Joseph Hertz published his Ph.D. thesis, The Ethical System of James Martineau, which still provides the best critical analysis of Martineau's ethics. This was followed in 1906 by a slim volume entitled, The Moral Teaching of James Martineau, written by Alfred Hall, one of Martineau's biographers. The sixth edition of Henry Sidgwick's Outlines of the History of Ethics (1931) contained an additional chapter by Alban Widgery of Duke University, which included a survey of Martineau's ethics. More recently Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy (1977) by J. B. Schneewind, has an extensive section on Martineau, on whom Sidgwick wrote more than he did on any other philosopher, with the exception of Herbert Spencer. Schneewind gives a clear account of Martineau's moral philosophy as expressed in Types of Ethical Theory covering many of the points at issue between Martineau and Sidgwick.

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264. L. P. Jacks, From Authority to Freedom: The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Charles Hargrove (London, 1920), pp. 277-8.



However, Schneewind does not treat the direct confrontation between the two men recorded in the pages of the journal Mind, 1885-1886, which highlighted their respective theories of ethics. Its importance is found in that it represented the battle between what were essentially the Christian ethics of Martineau and the utilitarian or hedonistic ethics of Sidgwick.

Martineau clearly set out his ethical stance in Studies of Christianity (1858), which he developed fully in Types of Ethical Theory (1885). There were four basic assumptions to his ethics. He emphasized that morality was concerned with motive or inner springs of action, rather than with the outward actions themselves. He believed this was the characteristic of Christian ethics, which found its supreme expression in the Sermon on the Mount. (265) This emphasis upon the springs of action connected Martineau's ethics with the doctrine of justification by faith. He did however recognise that the springs of action had to be translated into outward operations but this, he believed, was a practical or rational problem rather than a moral one.

Following this initial point, Martineau made the assumption that every person had the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and higher and lower values:

WE HAVE FAITH in the Moral Perceptions of Man. The conscience with which he is endowed enables him to appreciate the distinction between right and wrong; to understand the meaning of "ought" and "ought not"; to love and revere what is great and excellent in character, to abhor the mean and base; and to feel that in contrast between these we have the highest order of differences, by which mind can be separated from mind. (266)

In conjunction with this assertion, Martineau held that it was possible to work out a systematic scale of values; for whenever a person was confronted with two moral impulses, he had the ability to determine which was of

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265. Types of Ethical Theory, II, 26.

266. Studies of Christianity, p. 179.

greater moral worth. (267) For Martineau every action was right, which in the presence of a lower principle follows a higher. (268)

Martineau's next assumption was that this ability to distinguish moral worth was a God-given faculty that resided in the conscience:

The faculty is more than part and parcel of myself; it is the communion of God's life and guiding love entering and abiding with an apprehensive capacity in myself. (269)

Finally, Martineau's ethical theory affirmed man's free will and asserted that in every moral situation the individual must be faced with a choice of at least two alternatives. If there was no free will or no choice then no moral situation would exist. (270)

In 1885 Sidgwick wrote a review of Martineau's Types of Ethical Theory in which he made three major points against Martineau's ethical teaching. He questioned first Martineau's assertion that morality involves the individual bringing his will into line with another Will, namely God. Sidgwick asked, 'Is this other Will ... to be conceived as moral or non-moral?' He argued that the idea of a non-moral arbitrary external Will would be offensive to the religious consciousness of most people. If, however, this Supreme Will is to be conceived as moral, then the theologian must explain in what sense it is moral, for it clearly cannot be moral in the sense in which man is moral, by virtue of his relationship to a higher Will. (271)

Martineau made his reply in a later edition of the journal. He asserted that God was moral and that his morality corresponded with the morality of man. Martineau perceived morality as 'an order of preferential

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267. Types of Ethical Theory, II, 48.

268. Types of Ethical Theory, II, 270.

269. Types of Ethical Theory, II, 105.

270. Studies of Christianity, p. 470.

271. Henry Sidgwick, 'Critical Notices: "Types of Ethical Theory" by James Martineau', Mind, 9 (1885), 435.

love' or 'the consciousness of a graduated scale of excellence among the springs of action in a mind capable of choice.' In God the moral order is immanent, in man it is transcendent, and this transcendence is expressed in the human consciousness of an obligation higher than self. This consciousness of an obligation above man is not morality, but reveals the source and home of morality. (272)

Secondly, Sidgwick raised the issue as to whether true morality was that which is decreed from above, or as T. H. Green believed, that which is 'imposed by a man upon himself.' (273) In order to appreciate Martineau's reply it is important to note his belief that God works in the individual through inspiration. Martineau held that the 'self' which was aware of God imposed a moral duty on the 'finite human self':

The 'self' of which they speak as 'imposing' 'moral duty' is the communicated self-consciousness of the 'Absolute Self', - the infinite to the finite; whereas the 'self' on which it is imposed is the finite humanity which needs the regulative law. (274)

He moreover argued that if the moral order in our self-consciousness is like a miniature photograph of the Divine, which could be blurred or distorted by worldly conditions, then the end of this self-communication is fulfilled or fails according to whether this 'archetypal order abides or perishes.' He insisted that for man morality needs some outside reference, and was not merely 'the magnified shadow of our own figure on the clouds, it is a selection from the solar light itself refracted in the little lens of our humanity.' (275)

Thirdly, Sidgwick differentiates between 'intention' and 'motive' and held that moral judgements related primarily to intention rather than to motive. The major consideration in approving or disapproving of an act was

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272. James Martineau, 'Professor Sidgwick on "Types of Ethical Theory".', Mind, 10 (1885), 632-3.

273. Henry Sidgwick, Mind, 9 (1885), 436.

274. James Martineau, Mind, 10 (1885), 634.

275. James Martineau, Mind, 10 (1885), 634.

not the effect the agent 'desired' to produce, but the effect that he 'designed' to produce. Sidgwick believed that moral judgements were affected by the consequences of an act, and gave the example of a captain of a ship who loved ease rather than doing his duty; if however his ship was wrecked on the rocks it is not the motive of his action that is judged, but the consequences of it. (276)

In his reply to this point, Martineau agreed with Sidgwick's distinction that 'motive' covered what the agent desired and 'intention' what he designed, and pointed out that this distinction was first made by Bentham. Martineau's disagreement with Sidgwick and Bentham was that they assumed moral judgements were directed to the effects of action, while he maintained that morality 'looks inward' rather than 'forward', and was concerned with motive. (277)

Martineau tried to expose an inconsistency that he saw in Sidgwick's argument, by maintaining that 'intention' did not exclude motive:

We see at once that the opposed terms are not mutually exclusive. 'Intention' is the larger and includes the 'motive': among the 'designed effects' is found, of course, the 'desired effect', though along with it may be others .... Hence, in judging action by 'intentions', we necessarily take account of the 'motive' as one of them; and when Professor Sidgwick says that our judgement "refers primarily to intentions as distinct from motives," he can mean no more than to deny any isolation of the motive from its companions, as our selected guide to a true verdict. Yet he makes statements which seem to say outright that to our estimate of a man's acts it may be no matter what the motive is provided he keeps within a given external category. (278)

The confrontation between Martineau and Sidgwick centred on the question of whether morality was to be judged by motives or actions. The problem with Sidgwick's theory is that judgement by results does not allow for accidents or genuine mistakes. Moreover, it must tend to treat

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276. Henry Sidgwick, Mind, 9 (1885), 438-441.

277. James Martineau, Mind, 10 (1885), 636.

278. James Martineau, Mind, 10 (1885), 636-37.

everything and everybody as a means to an end, as it is the end which is judged. However in favour of Sidgwick's ethics it could be argued that outer actions are the only things which can be observed, and therefore judged.

The difficulty with Martineau's theory of ethics is the problem of judging motives, especially those of others. There is no process for confirming that the Divine Will places an obligation on the human will. It is however important to realise that Martineau felt himself to be defending the Christian ethic in which motive seemed to be paramount. He devised a system where the individual judged himself rather than others, and this too seemed to be in harmony with the Christian ethic. It was on this point that Martineau established the major differences between himself and Sidgwick several years prior to this dispute. Before Sidgwick published his Methods of Ethics he generously sent the manuscript to Martineau, to ascertain whether he had correctly interpreted Martineau's views. In his reply Martineau identified the major principle of difference between them:

The fundamental difference between us is, I believe, that you regard our judgement of others' actions as the primary moral fact, whilst I find it in judgement upon our own.  
(279)

### Assessment

Martineau was too broadminded to be a disciple of any school. He was eclectic in his nature and gathered ideas from any source which appealed to his own intellect and emotional character. Thus his philosophical theology was shaped as much by his personality and the movements of the age than by specific adherence to one particular school of thought. He, in himself, was a record of nineteenth-century theology; born only three years after the death of Kant and living on into the twentieth century, he engaged or commented on almost every theological personality or movement of the age,

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279. James Drummond and C. B. Upton, The Life and Letters of James Martineau, II, 365. (Letter from James Martineau to Henry Sidgwick, dated October, 10th. 1874.)

as can be seen in his four volumes of collected Essays, Reviews and Addresses.

An indication of his importance to nineteenth-century religious thought can be ascertained from the fact that he was highly regarded by his contemporaries or near-contemporaries. Tennyson considered him to be the most brilliant mind of the Metaphysical Society, (280) which included among its members Dean Stanley, Cardinal Manning, W. G. Ward, Thomas Huxley and R. H. Hutton. Gladstone and P. T. Forsyth, as we have already seen, rated him highly among the intellectuals of the day.

He also deserves a place in the history of English religious thought because of his influence upon others. Not only did he influence F. W. Robertson and Bishop Colenso, but there were also those who were attracted to Unitarianism because of him; the two best-known being Stopford Brooke and L. P. Jacks. Then there were the young ladies who came under his influence: the most famous of these were Mary Carpenter, Catherine and Susanna Winkworth and Anna Swanwick, the last of whom was to become the President of Bedford College, London and was associated with the founding of Girton College, Cambridge and Somerville College, Oxford. As a young woman of eighteen she joined Martineau's 'young ladies' class' which he had formed when he moved to Liverpool. Her biographer wrote,

The teaching of James Martineau at that time appears to have acted as a wonderful stimulus to her mental development, revealing vistas undreamt of in her narrow course of reading ... She felt grateful all her life for his assistance and guidance in her youth, and the friendship thus begun, continued during a period of sixty-five years. (281)

There were others who came under Martineau's influence. (282)

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280. A. H. Craufurd, Recollections of James Martineau (Edinburgh, 1903), p.3.

281. Mary L. Bruce, Anna Swanwick (London, 1903), p.22.

282. Alec Vidler, Scenes from Clerical Life (London, 1977), p.167. Baron von Hügel went out of his way to meet James Martineau, and the story that Martineau told him was used by Alec Vidler in his retirement sermon, preached in King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

R. H. Hutton, editor of The Spectator, was one of his students and a life-long friend. Joseph Hertz, who later became the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, came under his influence and wrote a doctoral thesis in 1894 on Martineau's ethics.

Martineau's more direct contribution to English religious thought is recorded by Hugh Walker, Professor of English at St. David's University College, Lampeter, who in 1910 said of him:

At an earlier time Martineau the Unitarian would have been anathema to the orthodox; but while the rank and file were still absorbed in Gorham controversies and Jerusalem bishoprics, the more intelligent saw that the main battle was raging round the central positions, and were glad to welcome an ally who would help to hold these ... No one probably did more effective work than he in opposition to materialism, altruism, positivism, and all the schemes of thought which seemed to threaten the very existence of Christianity; and therefore many, even of those who found all the truth within the limits of the Thirty-nine Articles or the Westminster Confession, learnt to look upon him as the champion of a cause which was theirs as well as his.  
(283)

It was a sentiment which echoed the words of Stopford Brooke, preached at Martineau's funeral service in 1900 and which was due to be repeated several times in the decades that followed, by A. M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford; (284) by S. C. Carpenter in the 1930s; and more recently by Owen Chadwick in The Victorian Church.(285)

It would however be difficult to escape the impression that Martineau's influence on the twentieth century has been negligible. This may be due in part to the collapse of nineteenth-century Romanticism in the harsh realities of the First World War, where so many lost their faith and their lives in the fields of Flanders and the mud of the Somme.

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283. Hugh Walker, The Literature of the Victorian Era (Cambridge, 1910), pp.195-96.

284. H. J. McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England, p.250.

285. Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 2 vols. (London, 1966 & 1970), I, 398.

Subsequently, the rise of Biblical Theology in the 1930s, with Karl Barth in Germany and Edwyn Hoskyns in this country, would have discouraged interest in Martineau, with his radical criticism of the Bible, and his progressive view of biblical inspiration. Moreover, the decline of Unitarianism in the twentieth century and its movement away from Martineau's theological position resulted in there being no strong body of opinion which could have disseminated his ideas.

But the spirit of the present age may once again be congenial to Martineau's thought: his stress on feeling, and on conscience, and on a reasoned approach to the scriptures has much to say to our time. Moreover, the renewed interest in Schleiermacher also augurs well for one who was once called the 'English Schleiermacher', and holds open the possibility that he may attract renewed interest, as P. T. Forsyth did in the 1960s.

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## Chapter 2

### JAMES MARTINEAU'S CHRISTOLOGY

Martineau's Christology was central to his religious thought and indispensable to his understanding of major theological problems. It was never written up in any systematic form (although in The Seat of Authority in Religion some fundamental issues are discussed); it has to be sifted out from his books, articles, lectures, sermons, and letters written over a period of some seventy years. Not surprisingly, only one attempt has been made to set out his Christological position, and this was inadequate in its coverage and doubtful in its conclusions. (1) It is not just the amount of material involved, and its scattered nature, which has been a deterrent; the writings of a Unitarian, however eminent, have seemed an unlikely place to find a satisfactory Christology.

A careful study of Martineau's many writings reveals that a concept of Christ was essential to his systematic theology, and especially to his doctrine of God and his doctrine of the Church. His Christology is of special interest to the present time, because it anticipates much of what some modern theologians, such as Geoffrey Lampe and Maurice Wiles, have been advocating; it also produces a useful and well-thought-out Christological model which can still carry some theological weight.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to draw the exact parallels between Martineau's Christology and those of contemporary theologians, but I shall present a critical examination of Martineau's own position, and the similarities between his thinking and that of the 1970s and 1980s will become apparent.

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1. 'Martineau Studies: His Christology', Hibbert Journal, 61 (1963), 147-149.

This anonymous article maintains that Martineau was propounding 'a new kind of self-sufficient rationalism, a Christianity which could in fact dispense with Christ.'

## The Background to Martineau's Christology

In the middle of the eighteenth century the majority of English Presbyterians held, along with a Newtonian cosmology, an Arian view of Christ. (2) Perhaps the most famous representative of this view was the Revd. Dr. John Taylor (1694-1761) the founder of the Octagon Chapel at Norwich. Eighteenth-century Arianism rose out of a desire to 'bring the doctrines of religion to the test of conscience and understanding'. (3) The Arians began with the absolute transcendence of God, the Father. He only was God in the proper sense. He himself was without source but was the proper source and origin of all that exists. This receives a classic statement in Isaac Watts's hymn 'God is a name my soul adores', from Horae Lyricae (1706):

From thy great self thy being springs  
Thou art thy own original,  
Made up of uncreated things,  
And self-sufficiency bears them all.

Arians went on to assert that the Son was a creature, incomparable, perfect but nevertheless derivative, the messenger of God who existed before the foundation of the world and came down from heaven.

Towards the end of the century Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808), and Thomas Belsham (1750-1829) propounded a Unitarianism that carried with it a view of Christ, not as the second person of the Trinity, or as the incarnate, pre-existent Word, but as a man commissioned by God. In 1770 Priestley, as tutor at the Warrington Academy, published his Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity, which popularised Unitarian views among the English Presbyterians. Three years later Lindsey succeeded from the Church of England and formed the Essex Street Unitarian Congregation in London, which

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2. H. L. Short and others, The English Presbyterians (London, 1968), p.222.

3. Walter Lloyd, Protestant Dissent and English Unitarianism (London, 1899), p.152.

became the focus and unofficial headquarters for English Unitarianism. In 1791 Belsham resigned as Principal of the Daventry Academy because of his conversion to Unitarianism and later succeeded Lindsey as Minister of the Essex Street Chapel; he gave impetus to the formation of Unitarian Association in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This new emphasis on the simple humanity of Christ met with opposition and was never uniformly accepted by all Unitarians. Francis Newman, for example, as a young man held an Arian view. (4)

When the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was formed in 1825 the adherents to the Belshamite theological position tried unsuccessfully to have a clause condemning Arian views of Christ written into the charter.

(5) Meanwhile, in Ireland, Arian views prevailed among non-subscribing Presbyterians, and this was the doctrinal position of J. H. Thom when he came from Belfast to Liverpool in 1829. (6) In England, however, the predominant view among Unitarians at the beginning of the nineteenth century was that Christ was only a man, but one uniquely commissioned by God, who proved his divine authority by the miracles he performed and his resurrection from the dead.

It is against this background that Martineau's beliefs about the person and work of Christ must be seen. But before discussing them, there are two criticisms of Martineau that need careful consideration: the first is that he was not a consistent thinker (7); the second, that he had a divided mind. (8)

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4. MS. letter from Francis Newman to James Martineau, November 15th. 1847; Manchester College Library, Oxford.  
W. G. Tarrant, The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement (London, 1910), pp.55-56.
  5. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, p.240.
  6. J. H. Thom, A Spiritual Faith (London, 1895), p.viii.
  7. 'Martineau Studies: His Christology', Hibbert Journal, 61 (1963), 148.
  8. Dennis G. Wigmore-Beddoes, Yesterdays Radicals (London, 1971), p.81.

### Martineau's Consistency

The first criticism was something of which he himself was acutely aware. In 1894 Martineau wrote to Valentine Davis regarding Davis' attempt to classify the theology of his sermons, and confessed that it would be difficult to do because his mind had moved so often. (9) One year later he wrote to Professor Knight of St. Andrews:

The mere record of my own personal changes of theological conviction, and the withdrawal by myself of certain early publications (the lectures contained in the Rationale of Religious Inquiry) from reproduction, seems to make good the charges of instability. (10)

There is some truth in this accusation of inconsistency. A study of Martineau's writings reveals not only a major turning point in his theology but also what appear to be, on the surface, several discrepancies. We see something of this in his attitude to Francis Newman. In writing to Mr. Edwin Cox (11) he labelled Newman and Miss F. P. Cobbe as 'Christians without Christ', but in a letter to Mr. Valentine Davis in the same year (1897) he implied that Newman was a non-Christian. (12) While these two letters reveal views not necessarily consistent with one another, they do appear incompatible without further explanation.

In defence of Martineau, it needs to be said that any person writing over a period of some seventy years would show some inconsistency if his personality and understanding had grown and developed; and if he had taken note of new knowledge and movements of thought. Thus Martineau's best apology is a clear admission of a natural change of mind:

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9. MS. letter from James Martineau to Valentine Davis, August 13th. 1894; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

10. William Knight, Retrospects (London, 1904), p.141.

11. MS. letter from James Martineau to Mr. Edwin Cox, September 1st. 1897; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

12. MS. letter from James Martineau to Valentine Davis, March 5th. 1897; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

It would be a strange result of a studious man's reading and reflection, did he find that he had nothing to learn and nothing to unlearn, but could still believe at fifty precisely what he had set down at twenty five ...(13)

Martineau could be remarkably consistent. We find evidence of this in his re-use of a sermon 'The Seat of Permanence in Religion'. This sermon contains much Christological material, and was preached twice, in November 1849 and again in October 1871 (Martineau always wrote on the top of his sermons the dates when they were preached). This was not an isolated event; it occurred with many of his important sermons and demonstrates a consistency of thought. For example, his sermon 'Faith in Christ for his own sake' was preached in Liverpool in 1840 and London in 1870; another sermon entitled 'Characteristics of the Christian Theory of God' was preached in Liverpool in 1837 and in London in 1868. Twenty of the sermons published in National Duties and Other Sermons (1903) were preached more than once.

Further evidence of his continuity of thought comes from examining his four-volume Essays, Reviews and Addresses published in 1890 and 1891. Here Martineau reproduces articles, sermons, and lectures, several of which had been printed, forty, fifty and almost sixty years previously; one, 'Need of Culture for the Christian Ministry', goes back to 1835.

There are, however, two important points on which he does change his thought: his concept of the Messiah, and the historical content of the life of Jesus as shown in the Gospels.

In his much publicised Liverpool Controversy Lectures of 1839 Martineau was professing a strong belief in Jesus as the Messiah. In the concluding words of the last lecture he stated: 'All Unitarian writers maintain ... the Messiahship of Christ, in whose person and spirit there is a Revelation of God and a Sanctification for Man'. (14) By the middle of

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13. James Martineau, Studies of Christianity (London, 1858), p.vi.

14. James Martineau, Christianity without Priest and without Ritual (Liverpool, 1839), p.51.

the century he had abandoned his belief in the concept of the Messiah for two reasons: firstly, his studies of the Jewish background to the gospels caused him to propound the idea of the Messiah as being an invention of the Jewish imagination; and secondly his study of the Gospels themselves led him to conclude that the disciples had superimposed the image of the Messiah on the life of Jesus.

In 1850 he published a review of Francis Newman's Phases of Faith. In it he attacked Newman's work because he saw it as undermining the importance of Christ, which Martineau held to be central to the whole Christian enterprise (it was this attack which hurt Newman bitterly and for a time caused a rift in their friendship). Newman had asserted that Jesus gave himself out to be the Messiah, which he plainly was not; against this Martineau argued that the term 'Messiah' was a vague and ambiguous word. He wrote 'It is needless to say that this term denotes no real object, ... but a wholly ideal personage, the arbitrary product of the Jewish imagination.' (15) A year later, Martineau preached a sermon entitled 'The God of Revelation His own Interpreter'. The editor of the British Weekly, Dr. Vaughan, was present in the congregation and subsequently published a favourable report of the sermon. On reading this account, the editor of the Christian Reformer, a Unitarian Journal, criticised Martineau for being too orthodox while at the same time abandoning the authority of the Bible. In order to defend himself, Martineau released the full text of the sermon, which included a passage relating to the Messianic idea. Here he maintained that through their Jewish background the disciples had an idea of the Messiah engraved upon their minds, and this they projected on to Jesus. Martineau's study of the Gospels had evidently led him to conclude that 'A Messianic goal is evidently set up in the disciples' mind, and Jesus is exhibited to us as living towards it ...' (16) His change of mind

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15. James Martineau, Essays, Reviews and Addresses, 4 vols. (London, 1890, 1891), III, 26.

16. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 478.

concerning the term Messiah is well illustrated by a comparison of the contents of the two major hymn books he edited: Hymns for the Christian Church and Home (1840) and Hymns of Praise and Prayer (1873). In the earlier hymn book he uses the term Messiah liberally and substitutes it for 'Jesus' and 'Christ' in many of the traditional hymns. Thus, one of Martineau's favourite hymns 'O Jesus who art gone before' becomes 'Messiah now is gone before'. Martineau's own personal copy of the 1840 hymn book is of special interest because he pencilled in the date next to the hymn each time he sang it, or chose it for public worship. This reveals that he continued to sing hymns with the word 'Messiah' in them until 1873 when Hymns of Praise and Prayer was produced. In the new book he omitted all the references to the Messiah with the exception of James Montgomery's 'Receive Messiah gladly'.

Martineau's rejection of the term Messiah was not a denial that God could or would be active in his world through an individual person, but rather a rejection of the idea that the Prophets of the Old Testament had a blue-print of the exact character, function and purpose of the special representative of God.

The second area where Martineau altered his position was on the question of the historical content of the Gospels. The eventual conclusion he arrived at on the historicity of the Gospels is set down in The Seat of Authority in Religion (17) and is discussed in several of his papers, sermons and letters. (18) We can monitor his change of mind by again comparing the contents of his two hymn books. In Hymns for the Christian

17. James Martineau, The Seat of Authority in Religion, fifth edition (London, c1896), pp.635-36.

18. See i. MS letter from James Martineau to Estlin Carpenter, July 18th. 1898; Manchester College Library, Oxford.  
 ii. MS. letter from James Martineau to Russell Martineau July 15th. 1898; Manchester College Library, Oxford.  
 iii. James Martineau, National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses (London, 1903), pp.208-9.  
 iv. James Martineau, Hymns of Praise and Prayer (London, 1873), p.x.

Church and Home (1840) the important section on Christ concentrates upon his human qualities and upon the figure of Jesus the Man. The whole section is arranged to follow the pattern of Christ's earthly ministry, beginning with the Advent hymns, followed by hymns reflecting the incidents of his life, through to the Resurrection and Ascension. It ends with Christ's continuing influence in the world. Martineau's personal copy of the hymn book shows that he continued to sing hymns based on the miracle stories, such as 'The stilling of the storm' - 209; 'Jesus went to them walking on the Sea' - 206 and 'Even the winds and waves obey him' - 202. The first two were still in use in 1857 and the last one a decade later. The use of these hymns implies that he had not totally given up belief in miracles at this stage of his life, or at least, that he still found an important religious significance in them.

In Hymns of Praise and Prayer (1873) there is a much smaller section on Christ, reduced from thirty-six to twenty-two hymns, which corresponds to the reduction in Martineau's opinion of the historical material of the Gospels. He has removed most of the hymns relating to miracles, although there are still two referring to Christ stilling the storm: James Edward Smith's hymn 'When power divine in mortal form, Hushed with a word the raging storm' - 124, and Henry Hart Milman's 'Lord thou didst arise and say, To the troubled waters, peace' - 125. Both hymns, however, are used in an allegorical way, showing the peace of Jesus that can come to an individual in life and death. Martineau also removed the hymns based on the birth stories of Jesus, such as 'The Star of Bethlehem' - 192, 'The Guiding Star' - 193, 'The heavenly heralds of peace' - 194, 'The Nativity' - 195 and 'The Song of Simeon' - 197. However, the section on Christ in the 1873 book puts more emphasis upon the cross than does the earlier book.

Martineau gave similar weight in both books to the earthly life of Jesus and to Christian discipleship.

A comparison of the two hymn books suggests that Martineau came to regard the birth stories of Jesus as inauthentic and to place less



importance upon the historicity of the miracles, although still wishing to use them in an allegorical way. He did, however, retain a central historical core around the life and crucifixion of Jesus.

#### The Criticism of the Divided Mind

A second and more serious criticism levelled at Martineau is that he had a divided mind. It is a view propounded over a number of years and hinted at by two modern scholars, H. L. Short and Dennis Wigmore-Beddoes.

(19) The main contention is that in the study and the lecture room Martineau was an abstract theist who used critical reason to destroy many of the accepted beliefs of the Church, while in his sermons, prayers and hymns, he was a devout Christian, often regarded by his fellow Unitarians as dangerously so. One of his former students, R. H. Hutton, expressed the general criticism of Martineau's divided mind when, in reviewing Martineau's The Seat of Authority in Religion, he wrote:

In the region of conscience there is no more truly religious writer in England ... In the region of historical criticism, there is hardly any with so iconoclastic a bias towards pulling to pieces all that the religious sentiment of mankind has slowly built up. (20)

This same theme is taken up by the Baptist Times which carried an obituary of Martineau containing these words:

Dr. Martineau was unlike himself. He lived a dual life. As a critic and speculative thinker he was often destructive ... while as a devout and earnest seeker after God he was spiritual, intensely sympathetic with the moral and the divine and breathed the Spirit of Christ. (21)

More recently, Dennis Wigmore-Beddoes has imaginatively suggested that the photograph at the front of J. Estlin Carpenter's James Martineau reflects

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19. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, p.272.

Dennis Wigmore-Beddoes, Yesterdays Radicals, p.80-81.

20. R. H. Hutton, Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought (London, 1899), p.201.

21. Baptist Times, January 19th. 1900.

the tension in the mind of a man whose devotional expression was not entirely in harmony with his rationalistic theology. (22)

It is important to distinguish here between two things: the natural struggles of a thoughtful believer in the nineteenth century, and the intellectual dishonesty which is implied in some of the criticism of the divided mind. There is considerable evidence that Martineau felt the tensions attendant on his beliefs, in particular the struggle he went through in 1840 (vividly told in his *Biographical Memoranda*) when three times he tore up his lecture notes because he felt unhappy with his scheme of theology. (23) This is evidence of an integrity of thought rather than of a divided mind in the wrong sense. It was this dramatic and heart-searching experience of 1840 that threw him back on Kant. Like Kant, Martineau used critical reason to demolish many of the traditionally-accepted doctrines of Christianity (24) which he saw as obstacles to belief. At the same time he reconstructed his theology with faith in Christ at its centre. In a letter to William Knight, Martineau clearly set out what he had attempted to do:

What has been relinquished is historical tradition which partially crumbles away under the skilled search for its foundation; while what has been retained is the living and present relation, witnessed by consciousness itself, between the human spirit and the Spirit of the Divine, and when once known there, re-founded and recognised in its perfection under the unique personality of Christ our Head. (25)

Although there is evidence of the difficulties of this enterprise, there is no real division between Martineau's critical work and his devotional practice. Both are united towards the quest for a real faith

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22. Dennis Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterdays Radicals*, p.81.

23. MS. James Martineau, 'Biographical Memoranda'; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

24. Allan W. Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology* (Ithaca and London, 1978), p.15.

25. MS. letter from James Martineau to William Knight, May 12th. 1895; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

and what he called a 'first hand' religion. In his criticism he tried to pare away what he considered to be the unnecessary ecclesiastical accretions of the centuries in order to get to a solid base; in his worship he tried to get to the heart of religion, which he discerned as 'the immediate interaction between the soul and God'. (26) He came to believe that there were some things which could be determined empirically and through reason, and that there were others which could be discerned only spiritually. The divinity and character of Christ were examples of the latter. He set out his position in a letter to Mary Carpenter, dated February 1841 (which borrows from one of his 1840 sermons):

This kind of divine element in a person or a sentiment can only I think be "spiritually discerned" and was never otherwise known to anyone's soul. (27)

Thus what Martineau is advocating, under the influence of Kant and Blanco White, is that the authenticity of Christ is discerned from within, even though supported by external evidence.

#### MARTINEAU'S DENIAL OF ORTHODOX CHRISTOLOGY

##### A Rejection of the Language of Two Natures and the Doctrine of the Incarnation

Martineau's opposition to the orthodox Christianity of the nineteenth century contained a strong practical element. He argued against the orthodox position on the grounds that it substituted 'some doctrine about Christ' for 'the religion of Jesus Christ' (28) and replaced what Jesus was in reality by what people thought about him. Like Schleiermacher, he was deeply concerned to get to the heart of Christianity, to encourage others to follow Christ and to carry his cross. He objected to the language of

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26. MS. letter to William Knight, May 12th. 1895.

27. MS. letter from James Martineau to Mary Carpenter, February 10th. 1840; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

28. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.634.

Nicaea and Chalcedon on the grounds that it demanded a commitment to the substance of Christ, to the number of his natures and to his place in the past and the future. (29) In this we see the influence of Schleiermacher (which runs through the whole of Martineau's Christology); and also the influence of Harnack, who strove to get behind the dogma about Christ to the Gospel of Christ. (30) Martineau's position raises the questions: is it possible to get back to what Christ actually was? or can he be apprehended only through what others have thought about him? and is every idea of Christ a personal one? Alongside these practical concerns, Martineau had philosophical objections to the language of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Two of these must now be considered: the Problem of the Two Natures and the Incarnation.

#### The Problem of Two Natures

Martineau set out his main objections to the doctrine of two natures in the Liverpool Controversy of 1839. His essential argument was that in any such union the humanity of Christ would be lost. He maintained that in the union of two natures, the properties of Divine nature, omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, would directly exclude the properties of human nature: weakness, fallibility, local movement and position. (31) He illustrated this by saying that if any Being had the omniscience of God and the partial knowledge of man, 'it would be like saying, in addition to having all ideas he possessed some ideas'. From this illustration we can see that what is at risk is Christ's humanity, which for Martineau was a key factor in his Christology. This is Martineau's original development of Schleiermacher: he did not follow Schleiermacher's criticism that in any such union of two natures, a third would be formed, or that they would not

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29. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.634

30. Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? translated by Thomas Saunders (London, Edinburgh and Oxford, 1901), pp.13-14.

31. James Martineau, 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God" Proved to be False from the Jewish and Christian Scripture', in Unitarianism Defended (Liverpool, 1839), p.12.

be properly united. (32) Martineau much more anticipated modern Christological thought by objecting to such a union on the ground that the Divine nature would exclude the human nature.

In contradiction to the Athanasian Creed, Martineau reaffirmed the personal unity of God, and the simplicity of the nature of Christ. (33) In the last lecture of the Liverpool Controversy he raised some searching questions for those who held the contrary view, designed not necessarily to refute their position, but at least to point out the logical consequences of it:

What respectively happened to the two natures on the cross? what has become of Christ's human soul now? is it separated from the Godhead like any other immortal spirit, or is it added to the Deity, so as to introduce into his nature a new and fourth element? (34)

Martineau acknowledged that the doctrine of the two natures avoided some of the difficulties of Biblical interpretation; but he maintained that such an approach created more problems than it solved. He was also opposed to this doctrine on the grounds that it destroyed mystery: not that he was against mystery in religion; he firmly maintained that until a person was in touch with mystery, he was not in contact with religion at all. (35) His argument against the orthodox position of the two natures was not on the grounds that it presented a mystery, but that it was a rational attempt to destroy mystery. He held that mystery did not offer an object of belief but realms of possibility to be explored, whereas in the doctrine of the two natures one was told simply to believe both sides of the contradiction. His argument was similar to that of Maurice Wiles who suggests that: 'to

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32. Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, translated by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh, 1928), pp.391ff.

33. 'The Proposition: "Christ is God" Proved to be False', p.8.

34. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.50.

35. 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God", Proved to be False'. pp.8-9.

insist that trinitarian symbolism is ... disclosive of the essential nature of God himself embodies a claim to knowledge about the being of God that is hard to reconcile with the experiential and experimental character of faith.' (36)

Against Martineau's position there stands the theology of paradox and of tension: that sometimes two seemingly-opposed views need to be kept in tension in order to retain the truth. If one is jettisoned then the whole truth might be lost. To this may be added the argument of H. M. Relton (37), who maintained not that divinity would swallow up or exclude humanity, but that without God the human personality is incomplete, and that God alone can help it to its full realisation. Relton argued that the manhood of Christ is not less personal, but more fully personal than that of any other man, because of its complete unity with God. All of this Martineau could have agreed with, but not on the basis of two natures. It was this denial of the dual nature of Christ which was one of the crucial factors in his attack upon the doctrine of the Incarnation. (38)

#### The Doctrine of the Incarnation

Martineau's rejection of the doctrine of the Incarnation was clearly stated at the end of The Seat of Authority in Religion(39) and was set out in more detail in an important letter to William Knight (40) as well as being referred to in many of his other writings. It rested on three main pillars: his rejection of the two natures of Christ, his reaffirmation of the human Jesus as a starting point of Christology, and his acknowledgement of a mythical element in the Incarnation.

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36. Maurice Wiles, Faith and the Mystery of God (London, 1982), p.127.

37. D. M. Baillie, God was in Christ, Faber edition (London, 1961), p.90.

38. William Knight, Inter Amicos: Letters between James Martineau and William Knight (London, 1901), p.26.

39. The Seat of Authority in Religion, pp.491-93, 717.

40. William Knight, Inter Amicos, pp.22-23.

The doctrine of the two natures has been discussed above. The second argument concerned the humanity of Jesus. In writing to William Knight Martineau asked:

Was the body of Jesus the residence of a Divine Personality, and worked by the will and affections of the Eternal Son? Then he was human only in semblance, the inner self was God. It is not on the character of a brother man we gaze; and he was not one of us except in organic structure. Or, was the Eternal Son co-present in the body of Jesus with a human mind and will? Then (the human mind and will constitute a person) either the Eternal Son was not personal or there were two persons in the visible form of Jesus...(41)

The humanity of Christ was Martineau's starting point. In the same letter to William Knight, he affirmed that 'the figure of Christ which merges is to my eye simply human'. He went on to say that if he found unexplained factors in the personality of Jesus which seemed to be out of all proportion to his humanity, he would leave them untouched rather than 'construing them into the descent of a God from heaven.' (42)

In the third argument against the Incarnation Martineau set out his method for interpreting the Scriptures; that 'we should never, I suppose, have thought of claiming for him more than we assume to have been his claims for himself'. (43) In making this statement he poured doubt on the two texts in St. John's Gospel where Christ does seem to claim something more for himself: 'I and my Father are one' (19:30) and 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (14:9). He further acknowledged that it was from the Fourth Gospel that the whole theory of Jesus' relationship to God was constructed:

These are passages from the 4th gospel: and from that gospel is really drawn the whole theory respecting the person of Jesus in its relation to God, and the pre-existent union of the Son and the Father on which so much stress is laid. If this Gospel is not historical, but

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41. William Knight, Inter Amicos, pp.31-32.

42. William Knight, Inter Amicos, pp.24,25.

43. William Knight, Inter Amicos, pp.23-24.

a free product of the Christian genius in the middle of the second century, the very sayings fall away without which, you admit, the Incarnation would not be deduced. (44)

In a sermon entitled 'Great Principles and Small Duties' (45) published in 1843, he set down precisely how he believed that this mythologizing of the Incarnation had come about, (and produced an interpretation greatly appreciated by Crabb Robinson (46)). He started with the assertion that every fiction that grips human belief is a mistaken image of some great truth, and that the Incarnation falls into this category. He then went on to suggest that what the disciples saw was Jesus' serene dignity, a mind that appeared to be at one with the universe and its Author, which later produced in their affectionate memories 'a divine being who had disrobed himself of rightful glory to take pity on their sorrows.' (47) Because he displayed the moral attributes of God, they projected on to him the physical attributes of God and endowed him with a pre-existent nature:

Thus, the doctrine of the Incarnation faithfully represents the impression produced by the ministry and character of Christ. It is the dark shadow thrown across the age of Christendom by his mortal life, as it inevitably sinks into the distance. It is but the too literal description of the real elements of his history; a mistake of the morally for the physically divine; (48)

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44. William Knight, Inter Amicos, p.23.

45. James Martineau, Endeavours after the Christian Life, ninth edition (London, 1892), pp.23-33.

46. Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, edited by T. Sadler, 3 vols. (London, 1869), III, 230.  
Crabb Robinson wrote to Thomas Robinson, his brother, in September 1843: 'I am glad you have mentioned, as you did, Martineau's sermons. They delight me much; we seem to entertain precisely the same opinions of them. In consequence of your praise, I read out of their turn the two on the "Kingdom of God within us". They fully deserve your eulogy ... The interpretation of the doctrine of incarnation which follows, is in the same spirit and most excellent ...'

47. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.24.

48. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.23.



A criticism could therefore be levelled against Martineau of reductionism. He appears not only to have reduced the importance of the biblical material relating to Christ, but by his denial of the Incarnation he seems to have reduced the figure of Christ from the Second Person of the Trinity to that of a mere man, and consequently reduced his Christology to an anthropology. It could also be maintained that Martineau may have left a figure of Christ that cannot carry any theological significance nor be the basis of a Christology that has something vital to contribute to our understanding of God and man. It was this precise criticism that was made by a writer in the Hibbert Journal, who held that the theology of Martineau was totally self-sufficient without Christ. (49) But this is not the case, for it is one of the strengths of his Christology that he provided a model which would carry some theological weight. This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

One of the important features that emerges from Martineau's criticism of the doctrine of Incarnation is the real humanity of Christ. For being human involves belonging to a cultural tradition, with a definite heritage and parentage. Maurice Wiles expresses it well when he writes in a different context: '... the only "I" which has any meaning for me is an "I" with the specific genetic and environmental heritage into which I was born.' (50) If this is the case, then it could also be argued that the very idea of a pre-existent and Incarnate Christ rules out true humanity except of course, for the orthodox Trinitarian believer, for whom the co-existence of the humanity and Godhead in the person of Jesus Christ is miraculously possible.

Having destroyed the doctrine of the Incarnation, at least to his own satisfaction, Martineau did admit that it had an important religious value on two accounts. Firstly it guarded the church from the error that to be

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49. Hibbert Journal, 61 (1963), p.148.

50. Maurice Wiles, Faith and the Mystery of God, p.2.

divine means to have no feeling. (51) Secondly he saw it as pointing to the possibility of the union between God and humanity which was at the heart of Christianity. (52) He elaborated on this when writing against the Anglo-Catholic position on the Incarnation; that the Incarnation 'alone discloses the personality of God'. (53) Having attempted to refute that argument he wrote:

The Incarnation is true, not of Christ exclusively, but of Man universally and God everlastingly. He bends into the human, to dwell there: and humanity is the susceptible organ of the divine. And the spiritual light in us which forms our higher life is "of one substance" ... with his own Righteousness, - its manifestation, with unaltered essence and authority on the theatre of our nature. (54)

Such a doctrine raises the immediate question of whether Martineau's theology does need Christ or whether it is self-sufficient without him, and moreover in what sense, if at all, is the uniqueness of Christ preserved. These are questions which need to be answered when considering Martineau's own theology of Christ.

### MARTINEAU'S ALTERNATIVE CHRISTOLOGY

#### Jesus the Man

How did Martineau think of Christ? In his biography of Martineau, A. W. Jackson maintained that the Arianism of his ordination confession (in the non-subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland) was superseded by a humanitarian view of Christ, in which Christ became distinctly a man. With this change of nature there was a corresponding change of office. Christ ceased to be the Lord and Saviour, and became the teacher, exemplar, guide and friend. (55) However the evidence does not support Jackson, who

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51. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 328.

52. William Knight, Inter Amicos, p.32.

53. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 436.

54. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 443-44.

55. A. W. Jackson, James Martineau (Boston, 1900), p.196.

appears to have assumed that because Martineau was ordained in Dublin, he must have shared the Arian view predominant among non-subscribing Presbyterians in Ireland. That this was not the case is shown by the 'Biographical Memoranda', where Martineau recalls losing a valuable friend and member of the congregation in the early weeks of his ministry by preaching a sermon mildly critical of the Arian position. (56)

The whole tenor of his writings suggest that in this matter, at least, he followed Priestley in believing in a human Christ. (57) (H. L. Short in a carefully-worded article tries to show that Martineau's theology was a logical development of Priestley's but there is no evidence that Martineau himself saw it in this way). There is no doubt that, like Priestley, Martineau started his Christology from below, recognising Jesus as a distinct individual, a person with specific beliefs, hopes and values, all expressed in the thought and imagery of a particular historical person. Where Martineau diverged from Priestley was that Priestley saw Christ as a man chosen and exalted by God for a special purpose, and the death of Christ as just another example of the sad fate of prophets; (58) Martineau, on the other hand, had a very distinctive place in his theology for the death of Christ, and held that all men are chosen by God, but that Jesus was the one who supremely responded.

A sermon preached in 1842 shows that Martineau did not accept the birth stories of Christ or much of the literature concerning his nature, but did portray Christ as a real man with an individual nature. He claimed for Jesus no intellectual infallibility and no exemption from domestic or human ties. He held that Jesus grew up within the pattern of national thought set in an oriental atmosphere:

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56. 'Biographical Memoranda'

See also J. H. Thom, A Spiritual Faith (London, 1895), p.viii.

57. H. L. Short, 'Priestley and Martineau', Hibbert Journal, 60 (1962), 216.

58. Hibbert Journal, 60 (1962), 216.

Our rule requires from him, no intellectual infallibility; no exemption from all influences of an early home, of human ties, of rational thought, of the oriental atmosphere of life. He was actually in these relationships; with human eyes he looked round upon them; with a human mind he meditated on them; with human affections he loved them; with a human conscience he served them; (59)

Martineau concluded that, as Jesus affected them, so they must have affected and influenced him. We see here Martineau noting not only the individual human nature, but also the corporate human society that influences and affects each individual. Moreover, he recognised that Christ's feelings of anxiety and hope, of joy and tears have often been claimed as indications of his true humanity. (60) This emphasis on Jesus the Man is also brought out in the hymn books which have already been mentioned, Hymns for the Christian Church and Home and Hymns of Praise and Prayer. In both books Martineau includes hymns on the human qualities of Jesus, and the concentration upon the figure of Jesus as Man is a marked characteristic. There are hymns on his life and others showing his death on the Cross, dying in a human way and drawing out man's love.

It is the Cross which supremely represents the humanity of Christ in Martineau's thought. He sees the Cross, in part, as the focus of human agony and the making holy of human tragedy. For him the Cross was not a price to be paid by God's agent of redemption, but was an 'expression of human victory by goodness, meekness, holiness and sacrifice'. This is expressed in his finest hymn 'A Voice upon the midnight air'. The first five verses read:

A voice upon the midnight air,  
Where Kedron's moonlit waters stray,  
Weeps forth, in agony of prayer,  
O, Father! take this cup away!

Ah thou who sorrowest unto death,  
We conquer in thy mortal fray;  
And Earth, for all her children saith,  
O God! take not this cup away!

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59. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.211.

60. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.2.

O Lord of sorrow, meekly die:  
Thou'lt heal and hallow all our woe;  
Thy name refresh the mourner's sigh;  
Thy peace revive the faint and low.

Great Chief of faithful souls! arise:  
None else can lead the martyr-band,  
Who teach the brave, how peril flies,  
When faith unarmed, uplifts the hand.

O King of earth! the cross ascend:  
O'er climes and ages 'tis thy throne:  
Where'er thy fading eye may bend,  
The desert blooms, and is thine own.

James Martineau 1840 (61)

Martineau starts from the human Christ, and is aware of some of the problems that such an approach raises for Christology. How does an emphasis on the humanity of Christ engage with the problem of the unity of his person with God, if such a unity exists? Moreover the concentration on the humanity of Jesus raises the question of the language of two natures, and how if at all we can attribute divinity to Christ, and what sort of divinity we need to affirm. He recognises that emphasis on the humanity of Jesus raises the question of the uniqueness of Christ. He discussed these and other questions in an interesting series of letters, (many of them unpublished) to the Rev. V. D. Davis in the 1890s. These will be found in full in the Appendix: their contents have been used in the following sections, which are concerned with Martineau's answers to the problems he encountered.

#### Jesus Christ filled by the Spirit of God

In his lecture on 'The Bible: what it is, and what it is not' Martineau says:

There is One who stands at the place where its converging lines all meet ... He is the central object around whom all the ages and events of the Bible are but an outlining circumference. (62)

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61. James Martineau, Hymns for the Christian Church and Home seventeenth edition (London, 1867), No. 218.

62. James Martineau, 'The Bible, what it is and what it is not', in Unitarianism Defended (Liverpool, 1839), p.2.

What gives Jesus the fully human person this supreme position in the Bible and in history? It is certainly not his origin. For according to Martineau the special position enjoyed by Christ is not due to the fact that he is from God, and that other men are not from God or are less so. He followed Augustine in that he believed that everything came from God, and that there are no beings or things which are not from him. In writing to Mary Carpenter in 1841 Martineau expressed this forcefully:

In point of origin, all things, all persons, all offices, all ideas are equal and immediate derivations from the Supreme Will. (63)

He went on to argue that unless one believed in a satanic or material origin other than the Divine Will of God, which sends things into the world, one could not define divinity by means of origin except by maintaining that everything is divine. He concluded by emphasising that he saw divinity not in origin, where all things are equal, but in 'intrinsic character and influence, eternal beauty, truth and sanctity'.

It might appear at first sight that he was advocating an adjectival divinity, but Martineau was claiming much more for Christ than that he showed in his human character glimpses of God. A constant and recurring theme throughout his writings is that Jesus has this quality of character, this divinity, because he is totally inspired and filled by the Spirit of God:

The inspiration of Christ is ... diffusive, creative, vivifying as the energy of God. (64)

In a sermon 'Christ the Divine Word' he explained the concept of the Word made flesh by asserting that in every life there is the human spirit and the Divine Spirit. It is difficult to know where one ends and the other begins: but in Christ the Divine Inspiration spread until it covered the

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63. MS. letter of James Martineau to Mary Carpenter, February 10th. 1841.

64. 'What the Bible is and what it is not', p.7.

whole soul and:

brought the human into moral coalescence with the Divine, then God was not merely represented by a foreign and resembling being, but personally there... (65)

Martineau made the point that just once in history God entirely occupied a soul and realised the perfect relation between the human spirit and the Divine. (66)

In a second sermon with the same title, 'Christ the Divine Word', he enlarged on his idea of the infinite God revealing himself through a finite person. He acknowledges that at first the whole idea seems as impossible as 'the ocean of everlasting power' turning 'into its own mountain stream'.

But he maintains that God does not withdraw from anywhere in his universe in order to be present in Christ. Thus a limited nature can be pervaded and filled by an unlimited nature and: 'the human soul can be filled so by the Divine Spirit as to leave no room for anything of a lower grade'. (67)

Martineau presented a picture of the Divine character being revealed through an individual concrete particular life. What he wished to exclude as 'antitheistic' to the personal life of God in Christ, was the Arian or Unitarian view which portrayed Christ as an imitation or mini-God. (68) In this sense he was opposed to Priestley's concept of Christ in so far as he saw it as a human imitation of God, or even as a puppet worked by strings from God. Martineau was advocating not an imitation of God, which could have only limited theological implications, but the Inspiration of Christ by the Spirit of God.

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65. James Martineau, Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, 2 vols. (London, 1876-1879), II, 205.

66. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 203.

67. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 212.

68. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, August 22nd. 1894; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

However his exposition of this principle does raise some important questions. If God dwells in a person to the exclusion of all else is the will of that person restricted and his personality damaged? If God entirely fills the mind of Jesus, is the humanity of Christ swallowed up, or left to consist only of his bodily organism? And in that case is there any union between God and man or has one person completely absorbed the other?

These are questions which Martineau himself was well aware of. He attempted to answer them in an important letter written to Davis dated 13th. August 1894. In this letter he set out his theories of God acting in the souls of men, which throw some light on the union between Christ and the Spirit of God. In general he held that:

Surely God may suggest or inspire the right and the holy, while leaving Man free to do it or to refrain; if so, each personality has its clear field of intentional operation, and yet the result is a single act; God being answerable for the possibility; Man, for the actuality. (69)

This process he saw in terms of God, the Divine voice, sounding the note in the individual conscience and inviting men to respond to it:

A holy volition, - a holy character (the sum of such volitions), can no more issue from one personality, than a harmony or union can come from one sounded note: it is a consonance and takes two at least to bring it out. And in the moral and spiritual life it is the Divine essence which contains the scale of graduated goodness, and the Divine voice within that, in each case sets the leading note, inviting the Human to fall in with concordant or identical will. (70)

In a sermon preached in 1837, he expressed his belief that it is Christ who brings this union to realisation within himself:

I pretend not to define the limits of divine agency in the human soul, and to show precisely where man ends and God begins. It is the glory of Christ that he has for ever

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69. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, August 13th. 1894; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

70. MS. letter to Valentine Davis, August 13th. 1894.



blended the two personalities in close relation; made it impossible for thought to untwine them... (71)

At this stage he has claimed nothing more for Christ than could possibly be attained by all men. And if he had claimed more, he could have debased Christ's true humanity.

The question now arises: how was it that Jesus became inspired or filled by the Spirit of God in the first instance? In one of his sermons Martineau asserted that man stood in a special relationship to God, over and above that of nature: 'For God made the world out of nothing, but Man out of himself'. Martineau here placed man in the same position as Trinitarian theology places Christ. The world operates under God's fixed laws, but man is bound only by the ties of love. For Martineau God was not eternally immutable, in the sense that he was everywhere and always equally present. He believed that God could be found, for example, more in the life of an angel than in the gravitation of a stone. So there were moments when the Spirit of God seemed to be silent and withdrawn and there were moments when he seemed to be very close. This was true also for Christ. But following Christ's experience in the wilderness there was 'no flitting to the Spirit off and on - it rested with him now.' Thus for Martineau, Christ was no longer his own; his humanity belonged to a higher will. This filling of the soul of Christ by God imparted God's own character into his life, and it was possible for all men to recognise it. Therefore Christ was the unique example of 'the Divine Life humanised and the human life glorified'. (72)

The idea of Jesus becoming the Christ after his wilderness experience is found in several of Martineau's sermons. In one entitled 'Eden and Gethsemane' he reaffirmed his claim: 'Ere Jesus became the Christ, he was led into the desert to be tempted.' (73) The wilderness was selected as the appropriate time for Christ to be filled by the Spirit of God, because in

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71. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.234.

72. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I. 3, 13, 14, 15.

73. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.39.

the three Gospel accounts the temptation in the wilderness was immediately followed by the commencement of his ministry and because in the Lukan account Christ emerges full of the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover Martineau's sermons and ethics continually emphasised the note of self-sacrifice and self-denial (a feature reflected in the title of his last book, Faith and Self-Surrender 1897) and these he found supremely in the life of Jesus in the wilderness and on the cross.

In the final analysis, Martineau's concept of Christ depended on his idea of God. His view of God therefore had an important bearing on his Christology, and this view of God must now be investigated.

#### God As Spirit

It was because he saw God as Spirit that Martineau's Christology took on a special significance. This enabled him to portray in his writings a true union between God and man taking place in the life of Christ. Consequently, there is a multitude of references to God as Spirit throughout Martineau's publications. In his Home Prayers, for example, there are thirty-two references to God as Spirit. On several occasions he refers to God as being, the 'Spirit of our spirits' (74) or 'Spirit of our secret life'. (75) The implication could be that God is a kind of archetypal man, but it is more likely that Martineau is emphasizing that man is made in the image of God, and that it is the Spirit of God which meets the spirits of men. (76) In his last letter to Estlin Carpenter, he followed this line of thought by referring to God as the 'Father of spirits' and spoke of his high regard for the Quakers, whose whole religious conviction rested on the 'inward Spirit of God'. (77)

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74. James Martineau, Home Prayers (London, 1892), pp.48, 93.

75. Home Prayers, p.86.

76. Home Prayers, p.89.

77. MS. letter from James Martineau to Estlin Carpenter, July 18th. 1898. (Extracts are quoted by Drummond and Upton, but it is found in its complete form in Manchester College Library, Oxford.)

This concern with God as Spirit was not something which developed only in his later life. In 1843 he published his Endeavours after the Christian Life, which has many references to God as Spirit scattered through its pages. In one of the sermons entitled 'Hand and Heart' he referred to 'God who is a Spirit', (78) and in other places he alluded to God as 'Divine Spirit' (79); in these sermons Jesus reveals the Father, not as the great mechanic of the Universe, but as 'the Holy Spirit that moves us within ...'. (80)

In the work of any person writing on Christian subjects one would not be surprised to find references to the Spirit of God, and yet this would not imply that the writer had any special conception of God as Spirit. In the case of Martineau, however, I am not building an elaborate doctrine from various scattered references, for he clearly set down what he did mean and what he did not mean by the term 'God as Spirit'. He explained his concept in a closely-argued sermon on the 'Characteristics of the Christian Theory of God', preached in Liverpool in 1837 and in London in 1868. He acknowledged that many religions had the concept of God as Spirit and that they had often conveyed the picture of God as a universal agency. He argued that with the exception of the teaching of Christ, religion had invariably denoted a negative spirituality, with the absence of a body, or the diffusion of power and influence over a vast area. (81) Martineau maintained that Christ does not portray God as Spirit only in the sense of existing everywhere in space, or being conscious of the whole content of time, or as commanding every force and producing every movement in the Universe. For if this is the sum total of his being, he would still be separated from man and would not be the Spirit in the Christian sense.

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78. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.171.

79. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.14.

80. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.37.

81. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.233.

Martineau thus saw God as Spirit in terms of:

a Mind, directly accessible to all other minds; seen most in the sanctity and greatness of other souls, - felt most in the secret faiths, the true remorse, the diviner aspirations of our own; as an internal Deity known to immediate consciousness, and exercising that mysterious influence of spirit over spirit, ... which would remain though the outward universe were cancelled. (82)

From his studies into the Jewish background to Christianity, Martineau took up what he believed to be the Jewish and Christian notion of Spirit being the common element of all that is Divine; whether it is God in his eternal essence, or the human soul that has turned to him. (83) He developed this theme further in a sermon entitled 'In him we live and move and have our being'. Here he maintained that the Infinite Spirit is not only that which makes a thing or person divine, but that it is the very source of life itself; an enveloping presence which keeps all creatures in existence:

He is the field that holds them; he is the essence that fills them and makes them what they are. (84)

There is a danger here of the Infinite Spirit being reduced to a pantheistic concept. However Martineau was aware of this and maintained that even when all the laws of movement and content of the universe have been added up, the full story of the life of God has not been told; there existed behind creation an 'infinite reserve of thought and beauty and holy love'. Thus he portrayed God as Spirit, not as a remote Intellect, or as an ethical atmosphere, or simply as a presence, but as the life of all, the power that works within us; and as 'an almighty wind that sweeps wherever spirits are'. (85)

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82. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, pp.233-34.

83. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.444.

84. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 110.

85. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 108, 109, 110.

For Martineau, God as Spirit, whatever he may be in himself, shows himself to men, not as eternal and immutable (except towards his creation of nature, over which he has set unchanging laws) but as dynamic and everchanging, like the 'mighty tides of nature and of history'. (86) It is in this way that he rises in the lives of men and especially in the life of Christ. (87) Martineau did however make the point that in order to be present in the life of an individual, God in no sense has to absent himself from somewhere else.

From not a place, not a moment, not a creature, did the divine tide ebb to make the flood that rose within the soul of Christ. (88)

This concept of God as Spirit is vital for Martineau's Christology. When he spoke of the Spirit of God inspiring or filling Jesus, he was not referring to a divine hypostasis distinct from God the Father and the Son, but rather to God himself as active towards his human creation. Thus it follows that in Jesus Christ, God himself has acted.

#### A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF MARTINEAU'S FORM OF CHRISTOLOGY

In making a critical assessment of Martineau's portrayal of Christ, it is of some importance to note that he raises four vital points (similar to those raised by Don Cupitt in his contribution to The Myth of God Incarnate). (89) Martineau argued against the doctrine of two natures in Christ on the grounds that the properties of divine nature are incompatible with the properties of human nature. He asked how Christ can be the incarnate Lord, and fully human, with both omniscience and ignorance.

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86. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 13, 14.

87. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 212.

88. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 212.

89. Don Cupitt, 'The Christ of Christendom', in The Myth of God Incarnate, edited by John Hick (London, 1977), pp.133-146.

Secondly, Martineau could not accept that the divine Word was united with the human from the moment of conception, for such a union would imply that it had been miraculously accomplished, independently by God without any struggling and suffering in Jesus' earthly life. As we have seen, for Martineau, the wilderness experience in Jesus' life was the key factor, and preceded his becoming the Christ. Thirdly, Martineau would have seen any one-sided action by God, without the co-operation of man, as diminishing the full humanity of Jesus, and thus to have been too like the necessarian doctrine of Priestley which denied man free will. Fourthly, Martineau raised the question as to what happens to the two natures of Christ after his death on the cross.

From this summary, it may seem that Martineau is simply repeating an argument of the early church and reproducing an old heresy. Martineau emphasized the humanity of Christ and held that God dwelt in him, in the same way as he dwelt within his saints; but permanently so (90) and to a far greater extent so that his character is completely revealed in Christ. Such a position leaves Martineau open to the criticism that he was adoptionist, because for him Jesus became the Christ after his wilderness experience. Such a criticism would have some justification, but there are two mitigating factors in Martineau's case. Firstly, his teaching is not simply that God adopted Jesus, but that Jesus by his total self-denial and sacrifice responded to what God offers all men, the indwelling of his Spirit and unity with him. In this sense Martineau is far from offering a straight-forward adoptionist theory. Secondly, his doctrine of God as Spirit who constantly permeates and supports the whole of life, but who is supremely seen in the life of Christ, helps Martineau to avoid this heresy.

As far as the development of early Christian Doctrine is concerned, Martineau would have wanted to join with the voices of many modern theologians and churchmen who have criticised the Chalcedonian Definition. But in so far as it states in terms of its age what is involved in the central truth of the Gospel: that in Jesus Christ, God himself visited and

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90. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I ,3.

redeemed his people, Martineau would have been in accord with it. It is important to attempt to assess how successfully Martineau preserved both the humanity and the Divinity of Christ. His doctrine of Jesus being filled by the Spirit of God has much to commend it. It could be suggested that the term 'inspiration' may in fact only imply a passing or temporary phase. But Martineau covers this criticism both by insisting that it was permanent inspiration, and also by using the term 'filled by the Spirit of God'.

It is clear that Martineau's Christology begins from below with a genuine man being filled by the Spirit of God. It could be claimed to be as much concerned as was two nature Christology to express the union of the human and divine in Jesus Christ. Moreover it could be claimed that it deals better than two nature Christology with the human limitations of Jesus, because it does not have two centres of consciousness, but only one which is human, but inspired and irradiated by what is divine. By this approach, Martineau was able to overcome some of the inadequacy of two nature theology, which may be interpreted as reducing the union of God and man to less than the personal level. Moreover, we can see that his approach to the doctrine of Christ safeguards the humanity of Jesus and his individuality; for by inspiration God seeks to promote a response from man, rather than to over-ride his freedom. Thus no human freedom is lost and Christ is still related to the historical, sociological, and hereditary conditions of being a first-century man in a first-century context. Martineau preserved the humanity of Christ more clearly than some interpretations of traditional Christology have done.

Whether or not Martineau has adequately preserved the divinity of Christ is an open question. There is no doubt that in his own mind he saw himself as passionately upholding the divinity of Christ, although it would be easy to see his approach as simply representing Jesus, not as a divine person, but purely as a man filled by the Spirit of God. However, Martineau was no less concerned than the advocates of the two-nature model

to uphold the divinity of Christ; but he wanted to find a way of doing so which was more philosophically credible than the two-nature view, and which did not jeopardise the unity of God. It is through his view of God as Spirit that the complete and perfect union of God and man can take place in Jesus. It is not just the influence of God exerted upon Jesus, or even the love or power of God guiding his life, but God himself as Spirit dwelling in the very life of Christ, and so uniting the divine and the human by inspiration. It is of interest to note that an orthodox theologian, the Revd. Dr. John Watson of Liverpool, could imply in 1903 that Martineau's Unitarianism was the affirmation of the Fatherhood of God, rather than a denial of the divinity of Christ. (91)

Martineau's approach to Christology does raise some important questions. Firstly, has he preserved the uniqueness of Christ? It may prove difficult to maintain the uniqueness of Christ, for one who starts from the true humanity of Jesus and holds a theory that he was inspired like all other men. Secondly, has Martineau's emphasis on Christ being filled by the Spirit of God sufficient scriptural evidence to support it? This in turn raises the whole question of his use of scripture in reconstructing his Christology. Thirdly, has he given sufficient importance to the historical Jesus? It would be odd to start a Christology from below without a concrete historical person for its foundation.

#### Does Martineau Safeguard the Uniqueness of Christ?

The uniqueness of Christ is a crucial test for any Christology. It is one thing to emphasize Christ's humanity, but this alone is insufficient for an adequate Christology, unless it goes hand in hand with a recognition of his special relationship with God. If this is not present, there is no justifiable reason for Christian theology to be so obsessed with the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. In his rejection of the two-nature model Martineau eliminated the major traditional method of asserting the uniqueness of

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91. John Watson, 'James Martineau: Saint of Theism', Hibbert Journal, 1 (1903), 235-271.



Christ, namely, that in the Incarnation the eternal Son of God was made man. Having excluded this method, did Martineau manage to safeguard the uniqueness of Christ by a different approach?

As we have already seen, there is much in his writing which emphasises the similarity of Christ to the rest of mankind. Some of his writing is so phrased that it seems to deny any belief in the uniqueness of Christ. For example in The Seat of Authority in Religion he wrote of the common presence of God in the conscience of mankind, and continued:

Were not our humanity itself an Emmanuel, there could be no Christ to bear the name. (92)

He thus implied that unless it was possible for the Divine Life to dwell in the human soul, God would not be able to dwell more intensely in Christ. Accordingly, Martineau's emphasis on the similarity of Christ to other men raises a serious question about Christ's uniqueness. A similar conclusion may be drawn from his essay on 'Tracts for Priest and People' where he asserted that 'The Incarnation is true not of Christ exclusively, but of man universally...' (93)

Once again he is emphasising the common humanity shared by Jesus and all mankind, and the way in which the Spirit of God dwells in Christ, as he dwells in other people, although at a greater intensity. In Home Prayers, however, we see what at first might appear to be a movement away from this position, towards a more exalted place for Christ. He wrote: 'O God, who didst send thy word to speak in the Prophets and live in thy Son'. (94) The suggestion here is that the prophets proclaimed the word of God, while Jesus in his life contained the living word of God; thus through the quality of his life God can be recognised. While there are aspects of this which would be a fair reflection of Martineau's teaching, it seems more likely that he simply used traditional biblical imagery in his prayers,

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92. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.338.

93. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 443.

94. Home Prayers, p.136.

rather than trying to make a major theological point.

Martineau is well aware of the importance of the uniqueness of Christ and laid down his view on three occasions. He gave perhaps his clearest and simplest account in an important letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis.

The Divineness which I meant to claim for Jesus is no other than that which I recognise in every human soul, which realises its possible communion with the Heavenly Father. And pre-eminence which I ascribe to him is simply one of degree, so superlative, however, as to stand out in strong relief from the plane of ordinary history. (95)

It is of some interest to note that in the letter written a week later, in answer to further queries from Davis, Martineau said Christ is 'the supreme example and revealer of the Immanence of God in the Human Conscience'. (96) His view of the uniqueness of Christ is enlarged upon in a sermon entitled 'Christ the Divine Word'. Here he discussed whether Christ's uniqueness is simply a difference of degree or whether it actually extends to a difference in kind from the wise and saintly people of every age. He attempted to clarify the problem with the following parable:

he that always hits the mark does not differ in kind from those whom he surpasses, yet, if all others fall short of this, he is unique. (97)

Thus Martineau was maintaining that Christ is unique, because he is different from other men not in kind, but in degree; in the sense that he is filled totally by the Spirit of God, while they are inspired by the same spirit but to a lesser degree. He made the same point in his last major work, The Seat of Authority in Religion where he maintained that 'It is the singleness of this life in God that gave its uniqueness to the personality of Jesus'... (98)

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95. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, August 13th. 1894.

96. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, August 22nd. 1894.

97. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 218.

98. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.672.

There are many references among Martineau's writings to the work of Christ which would also point towards his uniqueness; these will be discussed later in the chapter, when his Christology will be examined to see if it has any logical significance in relation to his idea of God. It is sufficient at this stage to discuss the central concept of his theory of the uniqueness of Christ.

The uniqueness which Martineau ascribed to Jesus as being one of degree and not of kind arose out of his concern not to exaggerate the differences between Jesus and the rest of mankind. He treated Jesus as a kind of genuine sample of the whole of humanity or a representative of mankind. In this approach he has the support of some of the writings of St. Paul, who speaks of Christ as the Second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22); and also a long legacy of Christian spirituality (e.g. the second Adam typology recurs in John Henry Newman's hymn 'Praise to the Holiest in the height'). Martineau thus portrayed Jesus as someone who has totally realised the immeasurable potential of man, but is not utterly removed from other men. He is unique in fact but not in principle.

Such an approach has a profound danger for Christology. The implication could be drawn from Martineau's Christology that the difference of Christ from other men is a difference purely of human qualities such as faith, or openness to God, or self-sacrifice or obedience. There would moreover be the problem of establishing such a claim, which could only be done through historical investigation. But there is neither the information nor the sources to establish the uniqueness of a particular characteristic of Jesus.

The positive side of Martineau's work on the other hand, is that he was advocating an inclusive uniqueness rather than an exclusive one. The problem with any exclusive uniqueness for the person of Jesus is that it may exclude the possibilities of revelation through other religions and other forms of intelligent life. The recognition of the validity of other religions, and the exploration of space with the discovery of new planets

and the possibility of other forms of life, both suggest that it is possible for God to reveal himself in other lives outside the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Martineau's system left all these possibilities open (although it is of interest to note that he had little time for other religions, as shown in his correspondence with both the Revd. Valentine Davis and his son Russell). (99) However, it could well be argued that to claim that Jesus Christ is the unique point of contact between the saving grace of God and humanity, is to see in Christ both the activity of God and the love of God to mankind.

The inclusive uniqueness for which Martineau was contending (although he never actually uses that term) is of such a kind as to include qualities found not only in Christ but in the saints of all the ages and traditions. By such an approach he left the door open to other religions. Support for this system can be found in St. John's Gospel which speaks of other men becoming 'the Sons of God'; and the same Gospel identifies in the man Jesus the Logos which 'enlightens everyman'. Thus Martineau's defence of the uniqueness of Christ, for all its shortcomings, has the advantage of being an attempt to state this uniqueness in such a way as not to exclude the revelation of God through all mankind.

#### Martineau's Use of Scripture

It is generally accepted that Scripture, and especially the New Testament documents, are important for any Christology. A Christ who is cut off from the New Testament would be a vague, colourless and mystical character, without any roots, and perhaps even without a name. The problem for any Christology is how to determine what the relationship is between the New Testament documents and the person of Jesus Christ. It is not sufficient to argue that there is an original New Testament Christology which can be used as a yardstick for all other christological models. The New Testament does not provide this, and it would be more accurate to

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99. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 29th. 1897.  
MS. letter from James Martineau to Russell Martineau, July 15th. 1898;  
Manchester College Library, Oxford.

recognise that within the New Testament itself there are a variety of approaches to Christology; for example in Hebrews we find both a pre-existent view of Christ and traces of an adoptionist view of Christ. It is against this background that Martineau's approach to scripture must be seen.

Martineau grew up in a church which, under the influence of Priestley and Belsham, was essentially scriptural. The Unitarians took their stand on the Bible, (100) and the individual was encouraged to study the contents of scripture and not to question its authority. However, by 1835 Martineau had moved away from this position, and in that year he wrote a sermon entitled 'Need of Culture for the Christian Ministry' which he preached on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Manchester New College. Towards the close of this sermon he spoke of the changing attitude towards scripture in the Unitarian Church:

The plenary inspiration of the Scriptures was once an admitted tenet among our Churches. It was supposed that the evangelical authors performed only the mechanical process of writing, and were, in fact, amanuenses to the dictation of the Holy Spirit ... All this has now changed. The tendency among us (a tendency not, I think, likely to be arrested) is towards the belief that the Sacred Writings are perfectly human in their origin, though recording superhuman events; that the Epistles abound in the discussion of questions now obsolete; that the Gospels, with one exception, were constructed from earlier documents, whose origin it is impossible to trace. (101)

A year later he wrote The Rationale of Religious Inquiry where he developed the same theme. In the first chapter, on Inspiration, he made several key observations regarding scripture. Firstly, the New Testament is a collection of separate writings whose unity is purely nominal. Secondly, it is difficult to discover any principle which has determined their selection. Thirdly, these writings were recorded for the First Century Hebrews, and that if there is anything of value in them, it is the emotion

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100. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau (London, 1905), pp.101-103.

101. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 365-66.

and the impression which they contain. (102) Thus he concluded his discussion of the New Testament documents by maintaining that:

they are perfectly human, though recording superhuman events; that they were written by good and competent men, who reported from their own memory, reasoned from their own intellect; who received impressions modified by their own imagination, who interpreted the ancient scriptures by their own rules, and retained the notions of philosophy which they had been taught, and of morals which approved themselves to their own conscience. They saw and felt what they wrote, and they wrote truly. (103)

However his approach to the New Testament in The Rationale of Religious Inquiry was not solely destructive. He did find a point of unity and a centre of convergence for the New Testament documents in the person of Jesus Christ. He wrote:

amid all the varieties of these writings, and not withstanding the complete individuality of each of their authors, there is one impression which, by all of them, is fixed upon the mind with perfect unity. A pure, vivid, and single image of Christ is reflected from each, and the forms entirely coalesce in outline, though the colouring is somewhat brightened, as each in turn is superimposed upon the others. (104)

We thus note that Martineau's attitude to the Bible was one of reverence: Christ is the central figure of the Bible, and being a Christian involves not merely an acceptance of him, but an acceptance of him together with the wonders accredited to him. (105)

On reading The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, Joseph Blanco White wrote to Martineau an important letter in which he raised two vital questions for the interpretation of the Bible:

are we bound as Christians to believe; first, that the writers of all and each of the books in the Bible were miraculously preserved from all error ...?

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102. James Martineau, The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, third edition (London, 1845), pp.6,7,8.

103. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p.10.

104. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p.9.

105. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p.10.

2ndly. Are we bound as Christians to believe with the utmost assurance that the existing books of the Bible are the identical compositions which those writers left to the world, and that no curtailment, addition, or interpolation, has taken place in regard to these books? (106)

From his consideration of Blanco White's questions and from his own wide reading (107) at this time, Martineau formed the view, that the use of the Bible must be selective. This view was set out in a sermon entitled 'The Bible and the Child' preached in 1845. Although it disturbed the minds of the denomination, it showed that Martineau had retained an important place for the Scriptures in his thinking. He suggested that the Bible should be offered to the child with discrimination and not be crowded into his mind 'en bloc' as such an approach would produce a 'system of confused and contradictory ideas, both of religion and of morals.' (108)

In the Preface to Hymns of Praise and Prayer (1873) Martineau discriminated between what is vital and permanent in the Bible, and what is transitory and of little importance. It is interesting to note that he felt that no 'modern congregation' could accept, for example, Joshua's control over the Sun or Jonah's adventures in the whale; however he acknowledged that between the certainly historical and the certainly unhistorical there lies a great area of uncertainty. (109) He maintained that the permanent essence of the Gospel is found 'in what Jesus of Nazareth himself was' and not in what was 'thought about his person, function, and office'. (110) (It is a distinction not unlike Harnack's kernel and husk). In order to make this distinction he laid down three rules to be applied critically to scripture:

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106. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, p.114.

107. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, p.283.

108. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 394.

109. Hymns of Praise and Prayer, p.xi.

110. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.633.

1. Whenever, during or before the ministry of Jesus, any person in the narrative is made to speak in language, or refer to events, which had their origin at a later date, the report is incredible as an anachronism.
2. Miraculous events cannot be regarded as adequately attested, in presence of natural causes accounting for belief in their occurrence.
3. Acts and words ascribed to Jesus which plainly transcend the moral level of the narrators authenticate themselves as his: while such as are out of character with his spirit, but congruous with theirs, must be referred to inaccurate tradition. (111)

The first of these rules, he asserted, reveals the inadequacy of the concept of the Messiah, which was a product of Jewish imagination, and which was reflected on to Jesus in the apostolic period. He also held the same view of many of the stories and sayings of Jesus, which emphasised the need to 'watch and wait' for the coming Kingdom. These, he maintained, were a product of the Apostolic period, where the apocalyptic belief was commonly held that the end of time was near and the Kingdom of God was imminent. (112) The second of these rules is so phrased as to leave open the possibility that miracles actually happened. The last rule is the most difficult of all. Martineau believed that it is possible to get from the New Testament a picture of the true moral and religious character of Jesus. This becomes a kind of central core, which is verified inwardly, and can be used to test the rest of the New Testament writings. This is the most questionable of all his rules, with its individualistic and subjective nature. However, it is important to recognise that Martineau's basic handling of scripture went hand in hand with the view that religious and moral truth can be recognised and verified internally. He made this plain in his article on 'Letter and Spirit' when after speaking about Scripture he stated that anything external which appeals to our understanding invites us to pass judgement upon it:

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111. The Seat of Authority in Religion, pp.635-36.

112. The Seat of Authority in Religion, pp.636, 651, 652.



Truth which touches the conscience and finds our highest nature, is not made human, - does not cease to be divine, - by simply entering our consciousness. It does not follow that, because we can recognise its worth when presented, we could originate it, if it were not. (113)

When this is analysed it is not so very far removed from Karl Barth's view that the Bible is composed of the words of men but becomes the Word of God when it reaches out and speaks to the individual as the Word of God.

In the light of his biblical criticism Martineau constructed a portrait of Jesus. It began not with the nativity but with his baptism by John in the River Jordan, which was followed by his temptation in the wilderness. After John was killed by Herod, Jesus began his ministry of prayer and preaching and conversation, on the roads, in the villages and by the sea. (114) In this reconstruction Martineau admitted that there were blanks and doubts about Jesus' life, but a clear picture of what he was emerges from the Bible and is far more important than what he did. He portrayed Jesus as having a deep concern for human need and suffering, and as someone who saw the pure and the spiritual, not beyond the material, but within it. His picture of Jesus included his 'setting his face towards Jerusalem, his teaching in the city, his sharing of the passover with his disciples and his hours in Gethsemane. His revelation was completed by his trial and his death on the cross. (115)

Martineau did contend for Jesus' resurrection, although not of the body. (116) Conspicuously absent in this picture of Jesus are the birth stories, most of the miracles and accounts of healing, the entry into Jerusalem and the resurrection appearances.

Having reviewed Martineau's approach to scripture (which will again be of interest in the problem of the historical Jesus) we must now ask whether the key points of Martineau's Christology are authenticated by scripture.

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113. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 253.

114. The Seat of Authority in Religion, pp.664, 666, 668.

115. The Seat of Authority in Religion, pp.669, 670, 674, 687, 694, 701, 702, 707, 709.

116. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.716.

His approach suggests three areas of enquiry: 1. Does Martineau's view of the inspiration of Christ find sufficient support in scripture? 2. Is it possible to throw doubt upon the events of Jesus' life, while maintaining that the character revealed by those events comes through clearly and undistorted? 3. Does his system give sufficient weight to the passion and crucifixion of Jesus, corresponding to the emphasis given to them in the New Testament?

In dealing with the first question, it has already been noted earlier in the chapter that the Gospels portray Jesus as filled by the Spirit of God at his baptism. (117) In St. Luke's Gospel (4:1) Jesus comes out of the wilderness filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, and when he begins his ministry at Nazareth, the Spirit of the Lord is upon him. (St. Luke 4:18) So initially Martineau did seem to be following the tenets of scripture. But in order to reach this point he had rejected the birth stories as recorded by St. Luke and St. Matthew. This rejection suggested a discarding of a belief in a pre-existent or eternal involvement of God in the life of Jesus. Both St. Paul and St. John imply that God's Spirit is able to dwell in people, and they equate the Spirit with God himself. This can be seen in St. Paul's analogy of the temple: Christians are a temple of God since God's Spirit dwells in them. (118) However there is no doubt that, in the writings of St. Paul and St. John, Christ is only partly identified with the indwelling Spirit of God because of their conception of the pre-existent Christ. Thus there is evidence to support Martineau's initial approach, but also evidence which would tend to deny it. The further assumption that Christ was totally and constantly filled by the Spirit of God is more difficult to substantiate from scripture, (although it is alluded to in St. John 1:32 'and rested on him'). Did Martineau draw this conclusion because the attitude and character of Jesus seemed constantly the same? And if so was Martineau's Christ forfeiting something

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117. St. Mark 1:10; St. Luke 3:21-22; St. Matthew 3:16; St. John 1:32ff.

118. 1 Corinthians 3:6.

of his humanity? And what of the words from the cross, 'My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?' Although this might just be the beginning of the Twenty-Second Psalm (as Martineau pointed out, a Psalm which ends with a note of triumph (119)) it might also simply have been a cry of despair. Moreover, Martineau was content to talk of the 'intermittent pulsation' of the Spirit in other lives, (120) so why not in the life of Christ? There is biblical evidence to support Martineau's basic assumption that Christ was filled by the Spirit of God; but is there sufficient evidence to suggest that Christ was constantly and totally filled by the Spirit of God? It does not seem so.

One can however perceive how Martineau made this assumption, in the same way as any theory of the Divinity of Christ must, by going beyond the evidence of the Gospels, although not necessarily contrary to them.

The second problem (of whether it is possible to cast doubt on the events recorded in the Gospels, and still to maintain that the character which these events reveal comes through clearly) is a key one for Martineau's approach. Martineau believed that morality and character are solely to do with inward motive. (121) However, it would appear that if the good and beautiful character is to be recognised, there must be some correlation between inward motives and external actions and relationships. If this is so, then some reliably recorded events will be needed in order to establish an opinion about the character of Christ.

Martineau was not advocating the view that the Gospels do not contain any reliable events from which a picture of Jesus can be drawn, but he was arguing that our knowledge is scanty 'of what he did and said during the great majority of his days'. (122) And although we cannot have confidence

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119. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.710

120. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 9.

121. James Martineau, Types of Ethical Theory, third edition, 2 vols. (London, 1889), II, 24.

122. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.669.

in all the fragments that remain, they are sufficient to reveal his character. If Martineau's argument is pushed to its logical conclusion, he was in effect saying that although we might doubt any particular incident from the life of Jesus, the incidents taken together give an overall impression of his character, rather than a detailed account of his life. By this approach Martineau avoided the problem of how an authentic and culturally-conditioned first-century figure can become the archetype of the relationship to God of all men, everywhere at all times. Martineau was not arguing against the assumption that Christ was a first-century man in a first-century context. He was simply stressing that such a picture of him cannot be fully reconstructed, nor did he feel that it was necessary to do so. What Christ said and did are subordinate to his personality.

I now turn to the third problem, whether Martineau gave sufficient importance to the crucifixion of Christ, corresponding to its emphasis by the New Testament writers. The general impression from reading his lectures, sermons, and hymn books is that he did give a prominent place to the death of Christ, while not wanting to separate it from his life. Both the life and death of Christ were a continuous process of his revelation of God, and in that sense Martineau did not want to separate one from the other as having a special function; although he was willing to concede that the death of Christ had a more concentrated purpose of revealing God than did his life. Both his major hymn books include sizeable sections on the crucifixion of Christ, and although he seldom published a sermon on the death of Christ, his writings do contain references to it. For example, the Liverpool Controversy of 1839 caused Martineau to make a major statement on the death of Christ. Here he maintained that the death of Christ deserved to be remembered more than all the features of his life, for without the crucifixion Jesus would have been limited to one race of people at a particular time and in a particular place:

It was the cross that opened to the nations the blessed ways of life, and put us all in relations not of law but of

love, to him and God. Hence the memorial of his death celebrates the universality and spirituality of the Gospel; declares the brotherhood of men, the fatherhood of providence, the personal affinity of every soul with God. (123)

In an Easter sermon on the suffering of Christ, Martineau portrayed the crucifixion as an example to Christians, showing them a new way of overcoming suffering and hardship. (124) Moreover he went on to assert that through duty, love and goodness in suffering, Christ revealed the image of God. (125)

Martineau thus gave an important place to the death of Christ in his Christology, although he saw the death of Jesus not in terms of a saving efficacy (as St. Paul did) but simply as a continuation of the revelation of God. (126) This is not to say that Martineau did not have a doctrine of salvation. For him it was the revelation of God, which brings about salvation, and as the death of Christ is an important part of this revelation, it does have a saving effect. This will be discussed later. Martineau's use of scripture was therefore conditioned by his other beliefs, and in turn it helped him to formulate his own ideas. It is interesting to note that several of his contemporaries felt that his critical approach to the Bible was too rigorous. P. T. Forsyth, writing a complimentary account of Martineau's life and work, said of him:

His criticism of the Bible was too little historical ... How did he fail to see that Christianity on his poor residuum of historic foundation could not possibly account for its own career? that it was too ideal, remote, aloof, and scholastic, like himself? (127)

R. H. Hutton, one of Martineau's former students, made a similar point when he likened Martineau's criticism to taking a great tree, stripping it of

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123. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.38.

124. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 122.

125. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 131.

126. The Seat of Authority in Religion, p.715.

127. P. T. Forsyth 'Dr Martineau', London Quarterly Review, 63 (1900), 223.

its leaves, branches and bark, and then pointing to the 'injured wreck as the true life of the whole'. (128) However, he did go on to acknowledge that Martineau's analysis of the life of Christ is 'one of the most wonderful achievements of destructive criticism'. (129) Hutton's complaint against Martineau was that he portrayed a Gospel of beauty without power, of promise without performance. This however was totally in line with Martineau's view of Christ set out as early as 1839, that Christ reveals the moral and not the physical attributes of God.

Martineau's Christology is in general consistent with his biblical criticism. Hutton was right to acknowledge his portrait as being one of the great achievements of destructive criticism. There is, as I have noted, the question as to whether Martineau's concept of Christ filled by the Spirit of God has sufficient support from scripture. There is certainly some biblical evidence in its favour. But the real question which his use of the Bible raises in relation to his Christology is whether his picture of Christ resulted from his biblical criticism, or whether his biblical criticism was made to fit in with his Christology.

#### The Historical Jesus

It must now be asked whether Martineau's Christology was grounded in the historical Jesus. For emphasis on the humanity of Christ would be difficult to maintain unless that humanity is related to the particular historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. One problem with the term 'the historical Jesus' is that it can have a variety of different meanings. It may be used to describe the results of scriptural exegesis, or the product of historical investigation. It may be used to convey the idea that there was an historical figure at the root of Christianity, but that nothing can be known about him. It might even be used to suggest that there was no historical figure as such, but simply a picture painted by Matthew, Mark,

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128. R. H. Hutton, Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought, (London, 1899), p.203.

129. R. H. Hutton, Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought, p.203.

Luke and John.

Martineau clearly recognised that the Christian Faith is centred on a definite historical figure. This figure, Jesus of Nazareth, is historical in the same way as Alexander the Great or the Emperor Constantine were historical. In a sermon entitled 'Historic Elements of Christian Faith', preached in 1842 and again in 1868, he maintained that 'belief in the historical personality of Jesus is surely a necessary element of Christian faith ...' (130) He argued that at the heart of Christian faith is trust in a person and not admiration of a scheme, and that:

Where the person is supposed to be unreal, the faith cannot be real. To the relation between Master and disciple both parties are indispensable; and if the Master vanishes in mythology, the discipleship slides into pretence. (131)

Martineau was arguing for the historical personality of Jesus, as being important, rather than the events of his life. This is because he believed that it is the character of Jesus which reveals God, and moreover, that it is only the character or personality of Jesus that can be recovered with any certainty from history; the individual events of Jesus' life can be known with less certainty. Martineau maintained that around the historical Jesus have grown up legends and myths which do not belong to his life and character. He thus contended that the historical Jesus was the real person of Christ in his 'insulated, individual nature', separated from the accretions of birth stories, literature about his nature, and conceptions of the first century which have been projected on to him. (132)

There are those who would question whether it is possible to get back to the actual Jesus of history. Geoffrey Lampe, for example, held that the Jesus of history is not directly seen in the Gospels, for what they portray

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130. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.206.

131. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.207.

132. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.208.

is the "Christ of faith" projected back into the pre-Easter period'.

(133) Thus for Lampe the 'historical Jesus is seen through the eyes of those who believed in him as the risen and ascended Lord...' (134)

Martineau had a much more straightforward, although not necessarily contradictory view, that the Gospel writers recognising in Christ the moral character of God, projected on to the account of the historical Jesus additional stories, powers and events which arose from their Messianic expectations. Moreover Martineau held that if these were removed one would be able to get back to the historical Jesus, who is crucial to the Christian faith. Thus for Martineau the whole life and teaching of Jesus were not passed through the coloured filters and lenses of the eyes of faith (as Lampe suggested) which would tend to distort the original picture. For him it was much more a process of selection, which retained an original historical core, and addition, whereby the Gospel writers recognising in Christ the moral attributes of God added the physical ones as well.

In the section on his treatment of Scripture, I have described Martineau's method for recovering the historical Jesus. However, in two letters written not long before he died he elaborated on this central core which comes out of the Gospels and contains the true record of the historical Jesus. In writing to Estlin Carpenter in 1898 he confessed that the historical core of the Gospels had for him diminished over the years:

The longer I study the literary genesis and comparative contents of our Gospels, the more does the securely historical nucleus of their reports respecting the Person and Sayings of Jesus shrink. (135)

In the same week he wrote a letter to his son Russell expressing a similar sentiment, but went on to outline what he considered to be the remaining

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133. Geoffrey Lampe, God as Spirit, S.C.M. edition (London, 1983), p.105.

134. Geoffrey Lampe, God as Spirit, pp.105-106.

135. MS. letter from James Martineau to J. Estlin Carpenter, July 18th. 1898.



historical kernel:

Greatly as the narrative, as historical, shrinks under the necessary sifting there remains a precious - nay a Divine nucleus that could not be there were it not both original and true. From the sum total of these sacred materials - Beatitudes, Parables, Prayers, Benedictions, anguished surrender unto death, - arises the unique figure of the Man of Sorrows, made perfect by suffering. I cannot help the longing to be found in the train of his disciples, and I do not fear rejection for my disbelief of many things imagined of him and accounted to him in current tradition. (136)

From this letter it would appear that Martineau saw the heart of the Gospels in Christ's life expressed through his teaching, prayer and events leading to his death, rather than in his individual actions, which in so many cases were represented as miraculous. This, as we have seen, is in line with his general interpretation of the Gospels: that they reveal the character of Jesus, rather than giving a detailed account of what he did. This too is in line with his view that it is Jesus who reveals the character of God.

Martineau recognised that reliance upon the historical Jesus could lead to error, but he believed that the error was less extravagant than the opposite error, which created a fictitious Jesus with no historical basis. (137) Such an approach would cut theology off from its historical roots and deprive it of life. In taking this stand, Martineau is in fact asserting that the truth of a Christological statement depends on the truth of an historical statement about Jesus, so far as it can be verified, or at least not contradicted by historical investigation. Exactly what Martineau felt the danger to be in emphasising the historical Jesus is not clear. But it is easy to see that any attempt to reconstruct the historical Jesus could result in a Jesus who simply reflects the theology of the person undertaking the reconstruction. (138) This is precisely the criticism

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136. MS. letter from James Martineau to Russell Martineau, July 15th. 1898.

137. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.209.

138. Geoffrey Lamp, God as Spirit, -pp.102-103.

which can be made of nineteenth-century attempts to write the Life of Jesus, such as those of Strauss and Renan.

Martineau's approach to the historical Jesus raises the fundamental question of whether it is possible to get back to the actual historical character. It has been suggested that no one can know precisely how far the figure represented in the Gospels corresponds to the actual historical figure of Jesus and moreover that all we have are other people's impressions of him. (139) This is true, but Martineau would wish to add that there are several impressions of Jesus which can be compared and contrasted; that literary comments which do not fit in to the general style could be removed; and that one can use intuition or spiritual discernment (140) as to whether a thing rings true (which is an argument open to all kinds of objection). There should also be some relationship between the events and the record of those events, even if, as Martineau contended, it is not the precise details which are preserved but the knowledge of a personality. (141)

This short survey of Martineau's concept of the historical Jesus shows that the writer in the Church Times was wrong when he suggested that Martineau was mainly interested in speculative philosophical religion and had practically no interest in history. He wrote:

The serious defect involved in this is apparent at once, if we reflect that Christianity claims first and last to be an historical religion, founded by an historical Person, and making its way in history by the continual support of the Divine Power, which first gave it birth. (142)

What the writer might have legitimately claimed was not that Martineau had

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139. Peter Hinchliff, 'Christology and Tradition', in God Incarnate: Story and Belief, edited by Peter Harvey (London, 1981), p.82.

140. MS. letter from James Martineau to Mr Edwin Cox, September 1st.1897; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

141. MS. letter from James Martineau to J. Estlin Carpenter, July 18th. 1898.

142. Church Times, January 19th. 1900.

failed to see the importance of the historic element of Christianity, but that Martineau's historical interpretation was different from his own. He could then have proceeded, if he had wished, to attack Martineau's historical approach on the grounds of its individualism.

In contrast to this writer in the Church Times, I am arguing that Martineau contended for a study of the historical Jesus as a necessary basis for any Christology; without it there would be no true foundation for Christian theology. In writing to Valentine Davis on 29 March 1897 he said:

The Jesus Christ who meets me when I critically reach the assured historic reality of his life and teaching, is and says all that I believe and venerate of the relation between the human soul and the Divine Inspirer of it...

Ultimately the study of the historical figure of Jesus is necessary if one believes, as Martineau did, that God himself is revealed in and through him. The problem has both theological and historical implications. Without the theological context Christology becomes merely a study of Jesus as an end in itself. On the other hand without the historical Jesus, theology becomes merely speculative ideology. Martineau avoided both these dangers.

I have attempted to show that Martineau contended for the uniqueness of Christ, even if it was an inclusive uniqueness, one of practice rather than of theory. I have also advocated that there is some scriptural evidence which supports the basic tenets of Martineau's Christological position, even though I acknowledge that he went beyond what is found in scripture. But this factor is a feature of many Christological constructions. Moreover I have shown that Martineau as a young man and at the end of his life held the view that the historical Jesus was essential to Christian faith.

Christology needs a theological dimension. Its function is essentially that of serving theology. It has a double reference in the

sense that it points to God, but also back to the historical Jesus in whom God was active. In the light of this the question must now be asked whether Martineau's Christology is the servant of theology, or simply a description of Jesus of Nazareth. This is the key question for assessing whether Martineau's Christology can be a helpful model for use alongside other Christological reconstructions.

## THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF MARTINEAU'S CHRISTOLOGY

### Jesus Reveals God

Martineau did not write up his Christology in a separate form, but left it in the context of his wider theological work; this may well have been because he wished it to carry out a theological function, rather than merely being an end in itself. One of the key theological assertions of his Christology is that Jesus is the revealer of God. This is a constantly recurring theme in his work, which was vividly expressed in his sermons and prayers, where he spoke of God as the 'Spirit of spirits' who 'shinest for us in the face of Jesus Christ' (143) and of Christ 'whose spirit was no other than thine own'. (144) Martineau depicted Christ as the revealer of God, and he had a clear conception of what revelation was. In a sermon on the historic elements of Christianity he made the distinction between natural and revealed religion. For him natural religion is that in which a man finds God, whereas revealed religion is that in which God finds man. (145)

Revelation for Martineau was not simply confined to Jesus. His concept of God as Spirit entering and inspiring the lives of individuals implies that God must be revealed in other lives, as well as in the life of Jesus. He expressed this vividly in a funeral address for F. D. Maurice,

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143. Home Prayers, p.93.

144. Home Prayers, p.77.

145. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.214.

recorded by Catherine Winkworth:

Mr. Martineau's sermon must have been a good one ... He showed how this highest thought was embodied in certain great thinkers who were like mountain summits catching the light and reflecting it into the valleys, and how precisely they of all men most strongly declared the light not to be their own, but drawn from a higher source. How one of those great summits, so to speak, had just passed from us; our generation had seen no man with a clearer insight into the eternal laws of God; with a more intense sense of the unity of humanity. But this did not make him put humanity in the place of God, it was the presence of God's Spirit in all men that gave him this sense, that enabled him to recognise with extraordinary vividness at once all the sin, pain and weakness of humanity, and yet never to despair ... (146)

In a sermon entitled 'Perfection, Divine and Human' Martineau maintained that God can be manifested directly in the mind of every individual and also manifested in the natural world. (147) However, the supreme revelation of God is Jesus Christ who confirms and corrects that which comes through other ways:

Blessed then be the name of the prophet of Nazareth, that in him we have a living standard, a true and pure image, by which our imaginations may wisely adjust their conceptions, and our hearts regulate their love of the Providence that rules our life ... (148)

For Martineau, Christ revealed God because the Spirit of God so completely dwelt within him that God was actually there in his life, with the result that Jesus had 'a mind at one with the universe and its Author'. (149) Christ was not the revealer of God simply by his teaching nor as an example of how to live. He was essentially the revealer of God in his actual person. Thus for Martineau the peculiar function of Christ was 'to show

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146. Margaret J. Shaen, Memorials of Two Sisters: Susanna and Catherine Winkworth (London, 1908), pp.277-78.

147. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 83.

148. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.232.

149. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.24.

us' God, rather than 'to tell us' about God. (150)

Martineau clearly saw Christ in his own person as the revealer of God in his person and character. He attributed to Christ all the moral attributes of Deity (such as absolute holiness, perception of right, mercy, disinterested love) which for Martineau filled the whole meaning of the word Divine. In this way Christ completely revealed the most perfect picture of God's character which can be intelligible to man. (151) He wrote:

These moral attributes of God, we conceive to have been compressed, in Christ, within the physical and intellectual limits of humanity; to have been unfolded and displayed amid the infirmities of a suffering and tempted nature; and, during the brevity of a mortal life, swiftly hurried to its close. (152)

He opposed attempts to add the intellectual and physical attributes of God (omnipotence and omnipresence) to Christ, on the grounds that they would interfere with Christ's complete humanity. (153)

Martineau's emphasis on God being revealed through Christ is seen at its strongest in a remarkable short paper entitled 'A Way Out of the Trinitarian Controversy' (1886). Its essential underlying feature is a plea to both Trinitarians and Unitarians to concentrate on the figure of Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, as a focus of unity. Martineau believed that little could be said about God the Father. He noted that the Nicene Creed designates him 'Maker of heaven and earth' but he added that this is not the sole prerogative of the Father, for it is said of the Second Person of the Trinity 'by him all things were made'. He asserted that the only distinctive characteristic of the Father is that he is Father of the Son. Thus Martineau concluded that the contemplation of the Father

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150. James Martineau, 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God," Proved to be False from Jewish and Christian Scriptures', pp.4, 6.

151. 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God," Proved to be False', p.6.

152. 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God," Proved to be False', p.6.

153. 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God," proved to be False', pp.6-7.

in himself presents a bare immensity, a dark blank of infinite possibility. He went on to suggest that it is the Son who really represents the Divine Nature to man. Thus Martineau suggested that it is the Second Person of the Trinity who is a point of identity for Unitarians and Trinitarians. For it is precisely around the figure of Jesus that the Trinitarians centre their faith, and it is the attributes found in him which give the Unitarians their essential concept of God. (154)

His effort to concentrate on Christ as being at the centre of both Unitarian and Trinitarian views was a brave attempt to bring together two apparently irreconcilable schools of thought. He was acting from the highest motives and with a deep desire to promote toleration and understanding among Christians of differing traditions. Not surprisingly, he failed to carry main-stream Unitarians with him. Nor would his arguments have persuaded many Trinitarians to abandon their entrenched position, which was based not on experience, or intuition, but on the interpretation of Scripture. Trinitarians would have maintained that if God reveals himself at all, then he reveals himself as he is, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. However Martineau's attempt to reconcile these two positions illuminates his belief that Christ, in his person, life and teaching, had a relationship with God and an understanding of God, which was sufficiently important to influence our own understanding of him.

Martineau maintained that Christ through his life gave an image of God without which man's conception of God would be cold and impersonal or merely majestic and distant, rather than the God revealed in Jesus who is 'nearer to our worn and wearied hearts'. (155) Such a statement is consistent with Martineau's belief that all men can have a partial image of God, irrespective of the revelation that comes through Jesus, because God as Spirit can dwell in the life of every person. Thus the revelation that

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154. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 531, 532, 535.

155. 'The Proposition: "That Christ is God," Proved to be False', p.5.

comes through Jesus can be confirmed by the individual's inner witness. In the same way as Christ interprets God, so 'we interpret Christ through our own sympathies'. (156)

This double reference to revelation is important for his teaching. Martineau gave Christ a special place in his systematic thought, for Christ is the perfect revelation of God, and the pure image of God. It also left the way open to other religions because God is directly, even if only partially, revealed in the hearts of men. (157) In an unpublished letter to Edwin Cox he set out his essential thought on the revelation of Christ being confirmed by man's inner consciousness:

The real persuasive power of the character and teaching of Christ depends on the accordance between what he personally was and said and our inward consciousness of what is most holy and lovely in spirit. Each of these wants the other. Without the inward susceptibility the outward act or word would tell us nothing ... (158)

The question is whether or not Martineau's Christ is the perfect image of God. It is a question raised by Francis Newman in a letter to Martineau at the end of 1847. The reply has not survived; but the question is of sufficient magnitude as to merit attention. It is probably best expressed in Newman's own words:

My dear Martineau, I do not think you quite understand some of my strictures. We are not concerned with the question of whether a certain historical character is a good man, a great man, an excellent and admirable man; but whether he is the perfect moral image of God. (159)

There is no easy answer to such a question. Certainly the Bible does not specifically state that Jesus is God, although there are several texts

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156. MS. sermon by James Martineau, 'The Love of Christ that Passeth Knowledge'; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

157. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 215.

158. MS. letter from James Martineau to Edwin Cox, September 1st. 1897.

159. MS. letter from Francis Newman to James Martineau, November 15th. 1847; Manchester College Library Oxford.



which could be construed to imply this. For Martineau such a belief could only come from the relationship between the recorded events of Christ's life and the inner conviction of what divinity is in its highest form. He set out his position on this in a Sermon entitled 'Faith in Christ for his own Sake':

The power of the human mind intuitively to discern the teachings of a divine truth, and consequently to accept Christ himself without necessary reference to his works, appears to me to follow from several considerations; ... And whoever sends a thought back to the time when the prophet of Nazareth was still an uninspired man; whoever adverts to the moment when the first celestial conception rose within him, and then asks how did he perceive the real character, the sanctity, the authority of this conception, must acknowledge some intuitive discernment by which the human and the divine could be separated. And if, in the first instance, his inspiration took him up as a human being, this faculty, enabling him to welcome a heavenly idea, must have belonged to his humanity, as an element of his and of our nature; nor is the denial of it anything else than a declaration of the impossibility of all inspiration. (160)

This is a problem not only for Martineau, for every Christology has to consider how to relate the life of Jesus of Nazareth to Almighty God. Martineau's reply is not out of line with many forms of Christian thought, which in approaching this question have had at some point to make a leap of faith. It is those who approach the person of Jesus and the events of his life through the eyes of faith who have the conviction that God reveals himself through Jesus Christ. Revelation has to be received; it has the power of revealing only to those who respond.

A further problem raised by Martineau's doctrine of revelation is whether he is right in equating the essential personality and character of God with his moral attributes. To put the question another way: If God is relieved of his attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, is his essential personality and character still the same? Martineau would have argued that it is. Once God chooses to reveal himself through a man,

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160. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, pp.138-140.

then there are bound to be some limitations, especially if his humanity is real. It is an exercise similar to that of drawing a picture of the world on a flat piece of paper; there will be some distortions. In his approach Martineau tried to minimise the distortions, by retaining what he considered to be essential to divinity, which is God's character and personality as revealed through Jesus. He did not attempt to retain the metaphysical attributes of God (omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence) as being seen in Jesus, as these would invalidate the humanity of Christ. In his biblical interpretation he tended to treat these attributes as additions to the true revelation contained in the account. There is a danger in this approach, in that the biblical documents are the only source of our knowledge of Jesus' life and teaching and to disregard some sections of the Gospel accounts as distortion could bring doubt on the whole record. And as already shown, Martineau dealt with the Scriptures in a consistent but doubtful manner: that of interpreting the Scriptures as one would any book, by using 'that sense of right and wrong which God has breathed into us'. (161)

There are similarities between Martineau's concept of God revealing himself in Christ, and that of the kenotic theory, for both emphasise that not all the attributes of God are found in Christ. Martineau however retained all the attributes which describe the personality of God and as such maintained the central premise of Christianity that the character of God is seen through Jesus. In this sense he produced a better Christological model than some forms of the kenotic theory which defend Christ's humanity by denying him certain divine characteristics. (162)

It has been argued that Kenosis only allows the humanity of Jesus to the degree that it denies his divinity, and the more complete the

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161, Studies of Christianity, p.199.

162. In the work of some kenoticists, such as Forsyth and Mackintosh, it is the spiritual and moral attributes which the Incarnate retains while relinquishing the metaphysical attributes.

self-emptying the less scope there is for God actually to be present in Christ Jesus. If this is true then Martineau's Christology is more efficient in revealing the essential character of God and better able to assert that God is actually present in Christ. Moreover, Martineau's Christological model avoids two dangers. Firstly, the danger of representing Christ as a scale model or miniature God, which can be portrayed by those who retain some of the physical attributes of God represented in the person of Christ. He avoided this danger because he did not want to show Christ as a scale model of God, or even just that Christ was like God, but that God was actually present in Christ. Secondly, Martineau avoided the danger, faced by many traditional Christological models, of having to explain what happened to the powers of the Second Person of the Trinity while Christ was on earth. Thus for Martineau Christ has an important theological function of revealing the true character of God, which without Jesus would be known only in an imperfect form.

#### Christ Reveals Man

In Martineau's Christology, Christ not only reveals God, but has a further theological function of revealing man; both as he could be and as he is. For Martineau, Christ represented the highest form of humanity. In a sermon preached in 1842 he said, 'and ere we can call ourselves his followers, must recognise him as the fairest form of human sanctity and wisdom'. (163) It is a theme to which he constantly returned. He referred to Christ as the 'perfect vision' who awakens the sleeping ideals within the hearts of men; (164) and again he spoke of Christ as being 'our highest in morals'. (165)

The idea of Christ as the perfect man is totally consistent with the rest of Martineau's theology and rises out of his initial assertion that

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163. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.210.

164. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 192.

165. MS. letter from Frances Newman to James Martineau, December 5th. 1847; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

Christ is filled by the Spirit of God, and as such truly reveals God. It would be difficult for Christ to be anything less than perfect man if he is to reveal the complete nature of God through his humanity. It is the perfect humanity of Christ which is the vehicle of God's revelation.

Four other aspects of Christ revealing man can be discerned in Martineau's thought; all of them flow from his concept of Christ's perfect humanity. Firstly, Christ reveals sin in others and illuminates all that falls short of the highest possibility for man. He sets a standard by which other lives can be measured. Any such comparison will reveal where other lives fall short of their potential. We see this sentiment expressed by Martineau in a sermon on moral evil:

The pure image of his mind, as it has passed from land to land, has taught men more of their own hearts than all the ancient aphorisms of self-knowledge; has inspired more sadness at evil ... and since Jesus began to 'reveal the thoughts of many hearts', Christendom with clasped hands, has fallen at his feet and cried 'We are sinful men, O Lord.' (166)

This comparison between the highest in humanity and lower achievements was possible for Martineau because he followed Aristotle in believing that, given the choice between two things, man has the capacity to recognise the higher and has the ability to choose it. (167) Thus it is in the light of the perfect humanity of Christ that the imperfections in the humanity of others are revealed.

Secondly, the perfect humanity of Christ reveals to man what he is in himself. This is not revealed, as sin is revealed, by contrast, but through a shared common humanity. 'He loves the souls he would convert, and knows them of the same family with his own.' It is because of his true humanity that he experiences the same joy and sorrow, anxiety and hope as do other men. (168) He expresses this in Endeavours after the Christian

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166. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.147-49.

167. Studies of Cristianity, p.179.

168. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.2.

Life where he wrote:

To him (Jesus) it was given, not to cast his eye around human life and observe by what scene it was encompassed; but to retire into it, and reveal what it contained; not to disclose how man is materially placed, but what he spiritually is; to comprehend and direct, not his natural advantages of skill and physical power, but his grief, his hope, his strife, his love, his sin, his worship. (169)

This belief that it is Christ who reveals the depths of the human heart goes hand in hand with Martineau's affirmation of the universality of experience. In the Preface to Endeavours after the Christian Life he argued that what he found to be true for himself, would be recognised by all men to be true. (170) The universality of experience extends to the life of Christ. He is the perfect man and, as such, his life contained and revealed the depth of human experience. A. M. Fairbairn expressed this sentiment, when, in writing of Martineau, he said:

But he did more than interpret to his age the significance of man's ultimate theistic beliefs, he gave them vitality by reading them through the consciousness of Jesus Christ. (171)

Thirdly, Martineau portrayed Christ as the example for all men. This can be clearly seen in his Home Prayer where there are some thirty references to Christ, eight of which refer to Christ as exemplar, (172) especially in respect to his humility and self-denial. It is of some interest to note that these were precisely the characteristics which according to Martineau were displayed by Jesus in the wilderness and enabled him to be invaded by the Spirit of God. This concept of Christ as the example is a key factor in Martineau's Christology, and a constant

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169. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.36.

170. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.vi.

171. A. M. Fairbairn, Rev. James Martineau : A Memorandum, (Manchester, 1907), p.10.

172. Home Prayers, pp.41, 46, 58, 65, 70, 88, 123.

theme in his writings, where he refers to 'Christ the model and end of life' (173) and to the soul of Jesus as 'God's choice work whose chief function was suggestive'. (174) This emphasis on Christ as example caused J. B. Schneewind to suggest that at the heart of Martineau's ethics is the stress on the need for the individual 'to pattern' himself on the perfect example whom God has sent as a guide. (175)

Fourthly, Christ reveals man in the sense of being the representative of mankind or the archetypal man. In his sermons Martineau saw in Christ's life the journey of everyman's soul. He expressed this vividly in one of his early published sermons, 'The Spirit of Life in Jesus Christ' where he depicts Christ as the representative of all men, showing them the goal to which they journey:

He thus becomes in a new sense the representative of our duty, our visible and outward conscience, revealing not only the end to which we must attain, but the successive steps by which our nature reaches it. (176)

Christ is the supreme representative of two important aspects of the religious life: the ideas of duty and of God within the soul. (177) It is only because Martineau held that every man's conscience 'tells the same story' that he was able to maintain that the ideas of duty and God within the soul would be the same for everyone, and thus could be represented by one individual. Martineau's assertion that in Christ perfect manhood is revealed raises the important question of how he equates Christ with perfection. This rests on the belief that the individual is able to recognise the highest when presented to him. This perfection is consistent

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173. Endeavours After the Christian Life, p.264.

174. MS. sermon of James Martineau, 'The Love of Christ which Passeth Knowledge'.

175. J. B. Schneewind, Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy (Oxford, 1977), p.246.

176. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.3.

177. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.4.

with the character of God and recognised in the biblical evidence of the life and teaching of Jesus.

There are several points where this theory might be challenged. One could question his basic assumption of man's ability to recognise and choose the highest, or to determine whether God is moral, or even whether he exists. Martineau's presentation might also be challenged on whether the image of Christ portrayed in the Gospels actually conforms to the Jesus of history. For as Francis Newman pointed out to Martineau, biographers often idealize their subjects. (178) An additional challenge might be on whether the biblical material actually does depict a perfect man. Again Newman suggested to Martineau that some of the actions of Jesus, such as leaving his family and occupation and encouraging others to do the same, might seem less than responsible. (179)

In answer to these challenges, Martineau maintained that the perfect nature of Christ was a revealed truth, through external and internal revelation. In effect he was saying: 'it is true because it is true for me'. However, this was not quite as subjective as it sounds, because Martineau was willing to test the truth by scripture (although he used his own interpretations of scripture) and he was willing to note what others had thought and said about it, though he did not always agree with them. Moreover he had a keen sense of the corporate nature of religion. (180)

Having seen that Martineau's Christology has a theological factor in revealing both God and man, we must now ask whether Martineau's Christology accommodates a doctrine of redemption.

#### Christology and Redemption

Martineau's Christology contained a strong redemptive factor, though he did not see redemption in terms of the orthodoxy of his day. This was

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178. MS. letter from Francis Newman to James Martineau, August 11th. 1852; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

179. MS. letter from Francis Newman to James Martineau, October, 1847; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

180. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.135-46.

due in part to the fact that he did not perceive evil, sin, and eternal punishment in their traditional forms. In the Liverpool Controversy of 1839 he raised some crucial objections to the orthodox interpretations of redemption and in so doing indicated a shift in English Unitarian thought, away from a totally scriptural theology, and towards a more personal and subjective interpretation of religion. In his lecture on 'Schemes of Vicarious Redemption' he argued against the accepted doctrine of the atonement on the grounds of scripture and reason. He maintained that nowhere in the Bible, including the teaching of Jesus, is there to be found any scheme of vicarious salvation. Jesus often spoke of the forgiveness and mercy of God, but 'never once of the satisfaction demanded by his justice'. (181) Martineau's grounds for arguing against vicarious redemption were that if our affections for God were called forth because he rescued us from an awful fate, the affection for a God who never created such a fate would be much greater. Moreover, he felt that such schemes were inconsistent with his image of God. He wrote, 'Never shall it be found true, that God must threaten us with vengeance, ere we can feel the shelter of his grace.' (182)

It was along similar theological lines, using scripture, and reason and experience, that he argued in his lecture on 'The Christian View of Moral Evil' that the origins of sin were not found either in God, or Satan or Adam, but were clearly located in the will of the individual and if removed from there would clearly undermine the individual's personal responsibility:

This sense of individual accountability, - notwithstanding the ingenuities of orthodox divines on the one hand, and necessarian philosophers on the other, - is impaired by all reference of the evil that is in us to any source beyond ourselves. To look for a remoter cause than our own guilty wills, - to contemplate it as a Providential instrument,

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181. James Martineau, 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with Itself', in Unitarianism Defended (Liverpool, 1839), p.66.

182. 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with Itself', p.70.



whether we trace it to Adam, to Satan, or directly to God, bewilders the simple perceptions of conscience and throws doubt on its distinct and solemn judgements. The injury may be different in character, according to the particular system we adopt: but any theory which provides the individual moral agent with participating causes of his guilt, offends and weakens some one of the feelings essential to the consciousness of responsibility. (183)

He rejected the idea of evil coming from God, even if represented as a precondition for greater good, on the grounds that such a proposition was totally incompatible with the Spirit of God portrayed in the life and teaching of Jesus. He dismissed the idea of evil coming from a created spirit of evil with a host of subordinate associates, because neither the Mosaic or the Christian dispensations had any revelation of the existence of such a being or a doctrinal solution respecting the origins of evil. To Martineau, Satan was used in the Bible not to signify the devil but to describe the internal moral conflicts which have had the appearance of 'the shadow of a dark Spirit, across the purer soul.' He rejected the notion of sin originating with the fall of Adam, on the basis that Adam's transgression belonged to him alone. (184)

Martineau equated moral evil with sin and located it firmly in the will of the individual person. Thus he rejected the traditional description of sin and set out his own doctrine which is a consequence of his ethical theory. It is best expressed in a paper published in 1858, entitled 'Sin: What it is and What it is not'. In this article he affirmed the personal nature of sin, by which he meant that there was no such thing as original sin, every individual being responsible for his own actions. For Martineau 'the essence of sin lies in the conscious free choice of the worse in the presence of a better no less possible.' He made three qualifications to this statement: that a real choice was available, that it was possible to distinguish the more worthy cause, and that the individual

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183. James Martineau, 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', in Unitarianism Defended(Liverpool, 1839), pp.34-35.

184. 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', pp. 34, 15, 30, 38.

must make the choice himself. (185) Martineau visualised redemption as a restored relationship with God, which was concurrent with man in each situation choosing the highest, with God being the highest of all. He expressed this redemption in different ways; being made whole; (186) the opening of a diviner universe to our experiences; (187) and being filled by the Spirit of God. For Martineau, 'Christ created a perception of the Internal and Spiritual God, that comes and takes his abode with childlike and hospitable hearts'. (188)

The difficulty in the relationship between man and God, Martineau maintained, was always on the side of man and never on the side of God. (189) It is Christ who enables men to overcome this difficulty by revealing God to them as he really is, which enables them to enter into a relationship with God, be filled by the Spirit of God, (190) be inspired by the highest, choose the highest, and sin no more. Martineau's theory of redemption has a strong positive element in that it is not concerned with Jesus paying a penalty or appeasing the wrath of God, but with Christ making men whole. 'Jesus saves by making us whole...' (191) He explained this function of Christ in his Studies of Christianity. It is chiefly to reconcile the individual to God, by awakening in him a consciousness of God. This may be accomplished by Christ revealing through his life a unique purity and greatness, which turns a person's thoughts to the 'Highest of all'. It may be achieved by showing that 'sanctity and tenderness' belong together, so that 'all abject and deterring fears are

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185. Studies of Christianity, pp.468, 469, 470.

186. 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with itself', p.71.

187. 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with itself', p.71.

188. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.236.

189. 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with itself', p.69.

190. 'The Bible: what it is, and what it is not', p.9.

191. 'The Scheme of Vicarious Redemption Inconsistent with itself', p.71.

swept away'. It may be done by awakening noble affection in the life of the individual, which can renew a person's future and recover him from present sins. (192)

Martineau was adamant on two points concerning redemption. Firstly that the primary factor in the relationship between God and man was not fear of punishment, but love. He wrote: 'Christianity ... relies, chiefly and characteristically, on affections of the heart, which no motive of reward and punishment can have the smallest tendency to excite'. (193) It was the life of Jesus which brought him to this conclusion. (194) Secondly Martineau held that there was nothing that could be done about past sins. Christ the mediator 'cannot change my past ... These have become realised facts, and none can cut off the entail of their consequences ...' (195) Thus Martineau maintained that the consequences of sin had to be borne; but what was of vital importance was the restored relationship with God in the present. He expressed this in the following words, 'But while the past can never be as though it were not', we can 'feel that we are at one with the universe and reconciled with God.' (196)

His view of the irrecoverable past appears harsh and rationalistic. But it is not so far removed from orthodox Christianity, which has stressed that past sin can be forgiven, but has also emphasised that the consequences of those sins have to be borne by the individual. Martineau claimed as much when he maintained that the relationship could be restored, even though nothing could be done about past sins. Does not the restoration of a relationship include forgiveness, and indeed imply more than forgiveness?

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192. Studies of Christianity, p.476.

193. 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', p.46.

194. 'The Christian View of Moral Evil', p.47.

195. Studies of Christianity, p.476.

196. Studies of Christianity, p.477.

There are in Martineau's papers occasional references which suggest that Christ is active in redemption in ways other than that of revealing God. In a sermon preached in 1868 for example, he refers to the transforming power of Christ working upon faithful minds. (197) There are also references in his prayers and sermons to the present activity of Christ. However the dominant theme in his work on redemption is that it occurs through revelation.

In his doctrine of Christ Martineau asserted the priority of the role of revelation over that of salvation. It is more important to know God than to know that we are saved, for a knowledge of God is essential to salvation.

Martineau used revelation as a major model for his Christology, and included rather than excluded the death of Jesus as part of the treatment of the total person of Christ and the total event of his revelation. Martineau's model of revelation actually included both revelation and salvation, because for him full salvation rested on the revealing presence of God in Jesus Christ.

It must now be asked whether Martineau had difficulty in fitting Christ into his theology; and whether or not his theology was self-sufficient without Christ.

#### Christ in Martineau's Theology

Martineau maintained that God could be initially known through three different means; through causality in nature, through conscience, and through intuition.

He began with the argument of causality because he regarded it as necessary to understand the relation of nature to God. He taught that in all causality there was a dynamic factor, consisting in the command of power necessary for the achievement of the contemplated end. The heart of

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197. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.235.

causality for Martineau was that 'Every phenomena springs from something other than phenomenon, and this Noumenon is Power'. (198) Moreover he believed that an examination of the range of natural history revealed intellectual purpose and intention. Martineau had a great respect for the teleological argument and portrayed God as the great Designer who bore the same relationship to the Universe as an architect to his building or an inventor to his machine. (199) But he recognised that the limitation of such an eighteenth-century approach was that it presented a concept of God only as an infinitely intellectual Being; such a Being could be known only as a causal force or will, who made no demands on man's affections (200) and who displayed none of the warmer attributes which could move and win the hearts of men. (201) 'As revealed in the Universe he remains a distant awful God'. (202)

Secondly, Martineau believed that God was revealed in the conscience of every individual, in a far deeper and more divine form than he is revealed through visible nature. (203) He saw conscience not simply as a private feeling or fancy. On the contrary he believed it was a sense of authority which came from something higher than the individual. As everyone is a person, that which is higher could only be another person, 'greater and higher and of deeper insight'. Martineau identified this person with God. This moral faculty he maintained was 'the communion of God's life and guiding love entering and abiding with an apprehensive capacity in myself'. (204) Conscience reveals more than natural religion,

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198. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, III, 576.

199. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.230.

200. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 198.

201. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.231.

202. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 198.

203. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 198.

204. Types of Ethical Theory, II, 104, 105.

because it is through conscience that a man knows the law of God and feels the demand of God upon his life. (205)

Thirdly Martineau held that God revealed himself directly in the hearts of men. Such insights are awakened by heroism that arouses a man from his selfishness, by purity, and by the word of genius that widens his spiritual horizons. (206)

Martineau recognised that these insights from causality, conscience and intuition into the nature of God were partial and liable to distortion from background and culture. (207) What religion needed and in fact had, was a vital central focus. Martineau found such a focus in the person of Christ, who as such, was of paramount importance to his theology.

Christ was predominantly the one who awakened the feeling for God in the individual's mind. Christ, 'in putting forth thence a transforming power upon all faithful minds ... created a perception of the Internal and Spiritual God'. (208) Moreover Christ fits into Martineau's theology as the external outward standard of all that is sacred and holy, against which individual beliefs, experiences and interpretations can be tested. He is the one who stops religion from being merely a private subjective belief, bringing harmony into it and reaffirming man's true inner revelation of God. (209)

In addition to this, Martineau saw Christ as the interpreter of conscience. Sometimes the conscience evokes feelings which appear as mere dreams until their reality is confirmed by the life of Christ. Christ is the one who scatters man's doubts about God and enables man to trust in his better self. (210) Finally, it is Christ who gives to man the complete

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205. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 200.

206. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 215, 202.

207. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 202.

208. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, pp.235-36.

209. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 203, 215.

210. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 73; II, 15.

picture of the character of God, showing his absolute holiness and selfless love (211) without which man's apprehension of God would be vague and attenuated.

Considering that Martineau starts his theology from natural religion and experience, he reaches a remarkably high view of Christ, with a key place for him in his theology. He was able to achieve that which Schleiermacher was criticised for failing to do, to create a consistent theology using experience, reason and scripture, and culminate with Christ being central to the whole structure and not merely an appendage to it.

#### CONCLUSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF MARTINEAU'S CHRISTOLOGY

The pre-eminence which Martineau gave Christ can be seen from the fact that out of one hundred and seventy eight of his published sermons, (212) one hundred and forty three were preached either on Christ's person or on words spoken by him. For Martineau Christ acted as a kind of counter-weight against which the rest of his theology was balanced and tested. The strength of his Christology did not lie in the originality of the individual ideas it encapsulated, for many of his ideas were taken from others and modified to suit his own purpose. From Kant and Coleridge he took the moral argument for God and projected it on to Jesus Christ. From Channing he took his initial objections to the Incarnation and the idea that the doctrine of the two natures of Christ presented serious intellectual difficulties. (213) With Emerson he shared the concept of God dwelling in man; (214) and in the background of all his christological

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211. 'The Proposition, "Christ is God," Proved to be False', p.6.

212. I have only included here the sermons contained in Martineau's major collections of sermons: Hours of Thought on Sacred Things (2 vols.), Endeavours (2 vols.), and National Duties. There are other published sermons including those in Essays, Reviews and Addresses and Faith and Self Surrender. Several of his sermons were privately published.

213. J. Estlin Carpenter, Freedom and Truth (London, 1925), p.6.

214. J. Estlin Carpenter, Freedom and Truth, p.7.

formulation was a deep reverence for Christ which he had inherited from his former teacher and friend, Lant Carpenter.

What Martineau did was to give purpose and direction to these ideas and mold them into a unified system of thought; the strength of his Christology lay in its overall completeness. Drawing from a wide variety of Christian traditions he was able to free himself from the grooves of contemporary Unitarian thought and pioneer new patterns of thinking, which had an appeal not only for Unitarians, but also for members of the wider Church.

His Christology is significant for three reasons:

1. It is crucial to know exactly what Martineau taught regarding Christ in order to appreciate his christological influence on the Unitarian movement, and to monitor how in the closing years of his life he was losing the battle for the Unitarian mind on this issue.
2. Without his high doctrine of Christ his influence on the wider Christian Church would have been reduced.
3. It provides a consistent christological model which could be used alongside other christological formulations.

#### 1. Martineau's Christology and Unitarianism

Under Martineau's influence, together with that of Thom, Tayler and Wicksteed, editors of the Prospective Review, the direction of Unitarian theology was considerably changed. This shift in theological emphasis included the elevation of Christ from being merely human to a concept of him which stressed his uniqueness, his centrality, and the unity of the divine with the human in his person. Moreover a knowledge of Martineau's Christology is also essential in appreciating the extent to which Unitarians moved away from his theological position at the end of the nineteenth century and in the opening years of the twentieth century.

Martineau grew up in a Unitarian movement which had been dominated by the influence of Joseph Priestley. H. L. Short wrote of Priestley that his



impact among Unitarians in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was unrivalled. He further noted that, 'It was his humanitarian view of Christ and his aggressiveness against orthodoxy which had prevailed'. (215)

Priestley set out his basic concept of Christ in a small book entitled, A General View of the Arguments for the Unity of God and Against the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ. He opposed both Trinitarian and Arian views of Christ on the grounds of reason, scripture and history. Arguing from scripture, for example, he maintained that God is called Father, which is equated with author of all beings, and that he is God and Father even with respect to Christ. (216) Arguing from history he held that the Apostles' Creed was added to on several occasions in the history of the early church, in order to exclude heretics. But up to the time of Tertullian it would have been possible for Unitarians to subscribe to it. (6) He concluded his investigation by asserting:

It will be perceived that the whole of the historical evidence is in favour of proper Unitarian doctrine, or that of Christ being a mere man, having been the faith of the primitive church, in opposition to the Arian, no less than the Trinitarian hypothesis. (218)

More light is thrown onto Priestley's Christology by the publication in 1781 of his Catechism for Children and Young Persons, where the major answers he gave concerning the person of Christ are as follows: (219)

Qu. By whom did God speak, not only to the Jews, but to the whole world of mankind?

An. By Jesus Christ who brought the most complete and extensive revelation of the will of God to man.

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215. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, p.253.

216. Joseph Priestley, A General View of the Arguments for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ, from Reason, from the Scriptures and from History (Birmingham, 1785), p.11.

217. Joseph Priestley, Arguments for the Unity of God, p.21.

218. Joseph Priestley, Arguments for the Unity of God, p.27.

219. Joseph Priestley, Catechism for Children and Young Persons (London, 1781), pp.32-34.

Qu. What was the proper design and end of Christ's coming into the world?

An. He came to make men happy in turning them from their iniquities and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Qu. In what respect was Christ superior to the prophets who went before?

An. In the perfection of his example, the purity of his precepts and the importance of the motives by which he enforced them; more especially as he gave us more distinct information concerning a future state of reward and punishment. He also put an end to the ceremonial law of Moses, sent his disciples to teach all nations the knowledge of God, and abolished the distinction between the Jews and the rest of the world.

Qu. What proof did Christ give of his divine mission?

An. He healed a multitude of sick persons ... He gave sight to the blind, raised persons from the dead, and rose himself from the grave after he had been dead three days, as he had foretold.

From this catechism several useful contrasts can be drawn between Martineau's and Priestley's concept of Christ. Priestley perceived the revelation that comes through Christ as being principally that of the will of God, while Martineau held that Christ chiefly reveals the nature and character of God. Priestley maintained that Christ came essentially to make men happy by turning them from iniquity to good works; whereas for Martineau happiness was not a key part of the Christian life. In reacting against the Utilitarian doctrine Martineau suggested that happiness, rather than being a product of the Christian life, may in some cases be a handicap to it. (220) He believed that Christ came to reveal the true nature of God and of man, which if apprehended would turn man towards God and towards goodness. Priestley saw the proof of Christ's divine mission in the healing miracles and the resurrection. For Martineau the proof of Christ's divine nature and mission was found in the quality of Christ's character, which every man had the capacity to recognise. Priestley thought of Christ as being superior to other men in his perfect example and the 'purity of

his precepts'. This is not far removed from the position of Martineau, who maintained that Christ was the perfect example in the realm both of morals and of duty. But for Martineau the essential difference between Christ and other men was that Christ is totally and permanently filled by the Spirit of God. Moreover Martineau's break with Priestley's Christology involved abandoning the idea that Christ had come to give information about punishment and reward in a future life.

The challenge to Priestley's position is described in a letter Martineau wrote to Channing in 1840. He noted that great changes were going on within English Unitarianism in reaction to Priestley's theology; he saw two new schools of thought rising among Unitarians. One denied supernatural events, belief in miracles and the uniqueness of Christianity. The other school was that of Martineau, Tayler, Thom and Wicksteed, who tried to steer a middle course between the new school of anti-supernaturalists and the traditional Priestleyan school, with its emphasis on scripture and reason. Martineau summed up the position of his own school showing that Christ was central to their religious thought:

Simultaneously with this diminished reliance upon the merely external evidence, has arisen a profounder sense of the intrinsically divine character of Christianity; a more penetrating appreciation of the mind of Christ; a more trustful faith in him for his own sake, and because he carries his own witness into the inmost reason and conscience. (221)

Martineau's insistence on Jesus being essential to the Christian faith is reflected in Francis Newman's interesting and friendly correspondence with him. A letter of 27 May 1848 is particularly noteworthy, revealing that Newman on his appointment as Principal of University Hall, London wanted Martineau to contribute to a collection of prayers to be used in the Hall. These were apparently to be written without any reference to Jesus. In this letter Newman pleads with Martineau for his help, but the

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221. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, p.187.

subsequent correspondence reveals that no help was forthcoming as Martineau would not contribute prayers that deliberately omitted reference to Christ.

The rise of Martineau's school of thought within Unitarianism was enhanced by his appointment to the full-time staff of Manchester New College in 1857. Susanna Winkworth expressed the importance of this appointment in a letter to Chevalier Bunsen:

Tomorrow two great battles are to be fought here in Manchester that will decide whether the direction towards free criticism or the reverse is to prevail in the Unitarian and Independent bodies. Among the Independents, Dr. Davidson is to be tried by the trustees of the chief Theological College for his criticism contained in his recent "Introduction to the Old Testament" and most likely he will be turned out of his Professorship. Among the Unitarians it is to be decided whether Mr. Martineau or one of the old school be invited to a vacant Professorship of Theology in their College. People are coming from all parts of England to vote in these two contests, which are of the highest significance for the future of Free Thought among the Dissenters of England. (222)

Martineau and his friends grew in influence and soon his school of thought became the prevailing force within Unitarianism. An indication of how his strong doctrine of Christ affected others can be found in a letter written to him by one of his hearers: 'To your influence exclusively I owe my deep love for our blessed Saviour'. (223)

During this time, although his position was dominant among Unitarians, it was never unopposed. (224) This can be seen in his correspondence with John Robinson, a Unitarian Minister, in which Martineau asked for support, at a forthcoming Ministers' meeting, for his christological position:

I quite hope to be present at the Ministers' Conference this day week: and I should be very glad if you found it in

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222. Margaret Shaen, Memorials of two Sisters: Susanna and Catherine Winkworth, pp.169-170.

Dr Davidson was removed from his Chair.

223. John Watson, 'James Martineau, Saint of Theism', Hibbert Journal, 1 (1900), 263.

224. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, p.263.

accordance with your convictions to give support to the opinion which is not otherwise likely to receive sympathy. The strength of the opposition which was manifested did not surprise or disappoint me ... But we have reached, I am firmly convinced, or are reaching, a state of feeling which requires a revision of our language with regard to the person and function of the Author of Christianity. (225)

By the last decade of the nineteenth century Martineau's insistence that Christ was both essential and central to the Christian faith was under attack from several directions. There were some who wanted to broaden Unitarianism into a wider theism, and others who felt that Christ was just one religious leader among many and therefore wished to explore the whole field of comparative religion. (226) It is not entirely true as Ian Sellers had suggested (227) that the natural development of Unitarianism lay in the field of comparative religion. But this was the step taken by Estlin Carpenter, with the result that he forfeited the uniqueness of Christ, as shown in his essay on 'Jesus or Christ':

The one is apprehended as the living Buddha, the other as the living Christ. The Indian sage is the very God himself; the Jewish prophet is indissolubly united with a Person within it. In each case the belief is justified by an appeal to experience ... History, philosophy, and religion alike demand that the same measure shall be meted out to both. (228)

Martineau's strong disapproval of this development is seen in a letter of July 1898, to his son Russell, concerning Carpenter's withdrawal from Manchester College to concentrate on his studies in comparative religion:

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225. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. John Robinson, November 30th. 1864; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

226. An indication of this trend can be seen in the history of the Hibbert Trust formed in 1843. The founder wished to call it the Anti-Trinitarian Fund but was dissuaded from so doing by James Martineau. Towards the end of the century a large proportion of its income was used to sponsor lectures on comparative religion and other associated subjects.

227. Ian Sellers, 'Liverpool Nonconformity, 1786-1914' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Keele, 1969), p.261.

228. J. Estlin Carpenter, 'Jesus or Christ', Hibbert Journal Supplement (1909), 247.

If his study of Pali and of the Buddhistic documents and usages interest him more than the contents of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin thought on things human and Divine, it is well both for him and for the College, that he should release himself from the limits inherent in his share of our training for the Christian Ministry. (229)

A last vigorous attempt by Martineau, at the age of ninety-one, to keep the Unitarian Ministry firmly on a Christian basis is revealed in his correspondence with Valentine Davis who had written to Martineau concerning Charles Voysey, a theist who wished to become a Unitarian Minister while professing no allegiance to Jesus Christ. Martineau's reply is his most strenuous defence of the place of Christ within the Church and clearly links his Christology with his doctrine of the Church: (230)

He desires recognition as a Minister in our Church. "A Church" is distinctively a Christian institution - an assembly of "the multitude of them who believe and are of one heart." Its sacred offices are sought by one who declines the Christian belief and the Christian name. What answer can he expect from the certifying authority whose testimony he seeks?.. Can they appoint him as their Pastor without changing their ecclesiastic position? Does it not amount to an abandonment of Christianity, and a lapse into simple Theism? If so he may be a Jew, a Moslem, a Buddhist, each of which is a believer in one God. Are the synagogue, the mosque, the Chinese temple, to appear in our Year Book, as places of the same worship as ours? To this there would be no objection if it were true that "the foundation on which we rest" is "that we are members of Free Churches, so as to affirm nothing and commit ourselves to nothing by belonging to them." But this is not true. The very word "Church" itself tells the story of its origin and significance. The ἐκκλησία κυριακή is the gathering together of the Lord's disciples, and denotes nothing either before or beyond the range of his community. The components of "a Church" are ipso facto "Christians". And so must they be if they are Unitarians. (231)

These two letters to Russell Martineau and to Valentine Davis both indicate that within Unitarianism his christological position was losing ground. This widening diversity within Unitarianism and the consequential movement away from Martineau's position can be clearly traced in the

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229. MS. letter from James Martineau to Russell Martineau, July 15th. 1898.

230. Because of this link I refer to this in the chapter on the Church.

231. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 29th. 1897.

several collections of essays published by the Lindsey Press in the opening years of the twentieth century. Sydney Mellone, for example, contributed an article on 'Unitarian Christianity in the twentieth century' to a volume of essays entitled Freedom and Truth, and quoted Martineau often and with approval, but in his writing Mellone propounded a much lower doctrine of Christ than Martineau had done. Mellone portrayed Christ as merely a symbol of God; moreover he was unwilling to acknowledge Jesus as the highest ideal in religious life and as the one essential to the highest religious aspirations in others:

The question which we set out to answer is therefore twofold. Is Jesus indispensable to the highest religious life? This is a theoretical question which we do not propose to discuss. We do not know what the highest religious life is; and no one is entitled to assert that his own personal type is the highest. Is Jesus valuable and important to the religious life? This is a practical question which demands an answer and which we answer in the light of the doctrine of Symbolism. (232)

Such an approach would have been unsatisfactory for Martineau, who held that Jesus exhibited the highest possible religious life within his own person; and in reducing the significance of Jesus to a mere 'doctrine of Symbolism' Mellone would have moved too far from orthodoxy for Martineau, who attributed to Jesus a more active role in religion, and often spoke of him as 'the author of our faith' and as the one who 'awakens faith' in the life of the individual.

The Transient and Permanent in Religion, (1908), was another collection of essays which revealed the way Unitarianism was developing along different lines from those laid down by Martineau. This book includes a series of leaflets under the title 'Unitarian Christianity', which attempted to set out Unitarian faith and belief. An examination of these papers shows that on several issues Unitarianism, in the opening years of the twentieth century, was not totally in harmony with Martineau's

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232. S. H. Mellone, 'Unitarian Christianity in the Twentieth Century', in Freedom and Truth, edited by J. Estlin Carpenter (London, 1925), p.79.

teaching. Two examples of this were the doctrinal standards of Unitarians and their doctrine of Christ. In the first case the doctrinal standard is set out as follows:

Unitarians have no authoritative or fixed creed: ministers and congregations are free to follow truth, righteousness and love, wherever they may lead. (233)

Such a statement does seem to be contrary to the position Martineau was contending for when writing to Valentine Davis concerning the Voysey affair. Against a proposal to widen Unitarianism into a general theism, Martineau argued that Unitarians were, in the words of John Taylor, 'Christians and Christians alone'. (234)

In the second instance, that of the doctrine of Christ, he is portrayed in these leaflets simply as a man. There is no reference to Martineau's teaching of Jesus being totally filled and inspired by the Spirit of God, so that God is actually present within him. In one of the leaflets entitled 'Belief in the God-Man', Richard Armstrong wrote, 'We Unitarians do not believe that Jesus Christ was God. We believe him to have been Man - purely and only Man. But we believe in the dignity of Man'. (235) In another paper on 'The Man Jesus', the writer gives an account of the life and ministry of Jesus with no mention of Jesus being filled by the Spirit of God. His record of the wilderness experience and the commencement of Jesus' ministry, so crucial for Martineau, has no reference to the Spirit of God, but simply to human endeavour and dedication:

Jesus, carried away by his (John the Baptist's) earnestness, takes the vow of baptism, along with many of

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233. 'Unitarian Leaflets: No. 2', in The Transient and Permanent in Religion, edited by W. Copeland Bowie (London, 1908), p.257.

234. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 5th. 1897.

235. 'Unitarian Leaflets :No. 6', in The Transient and Permanent in Religion, p.270.



his companions. Then comes a period of mental and spiritual temptation and conflict, and he retires into solitude to fight the battle out alone. Coming forth as victor over himself, he henceforth dedicates his life to the service of God and man. (236)

In contrast to this view, Martineau's Christology has a divine dimension which seems to be lacking in some of the developments of Unitarianism in the twentieth century. However it would be deceptive to give the impression that Unitarians rejected every christological idea propounded by Martineau. Several concepts of Christ for which Martineau contended were retained within Unitarianism, as can be seen in a small volume of essays on Unitarian Theology published as late as 1959. Here two important functions of Christ formulated by Martineau survived or reappeared: namely that of Christ as the external standard against which all our attainments are measured, (237) and that of Christ as the interpreter of human experience.(238)

In this section I am not saying that in his day every Unitarian followed Martineau in his Christology, or that every one of Martineau's school had an identical doctrine of Christ. What I am contending for is that in order to appreciate Unitarianism of the mid-nineteenth century one needs to take account of the dominant influence on the movement. Martineau was unquestionably the leading thinker, and his Christology was part of the influence he exerted on Unitarians which caused a general shift in their thought in the middle years of the century away from Priestley's doctrine of Christ. Towards the end of the century the anti-supernatural and conservative undercurrents of Unitarianism began to emerge, and new developments in comparative religion and general theism were evolving; all

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236. 'Unitarian Leaflets: No. 9', in The Transient and Permanent in Religion, p.285.

237. Fred Kenworthy, 'Jesus and the Gospel', in Essays in Unitarian Theology, edited by Kenneth Twinn (London, 1959), p.126.

238. C. Gordon Bolam, 'Theological Liberalism: A Vindication', in Essays in Unitarian Theology, p.129.

of which tended to displace Martineau's Christology, even though some elements of it survived.

## 2. Martineau's Christology was important for his influence outside Unitarianism in the wider Church

Craufurd makes the passing comment that, 'without his Christ, James Martineau's religious teaching would have been well-nigh inoperative and powerless as regards the great mass of our race.' (239) It is a view which rightly emphasises the importance of his Christology. It should be made more specific by maintaining that without his high doctrine of Christ, Martineau's influence on the Church would have been greatly reduced and largely confined to Unitarianism.

Although his reputation was already being made during the 1830s with the publication of The Rationale of Religious Inquiry and by his contribution to the Liverpool Controversy, it was the publication of Endeavours after the Christian Life in 1843 which made him widely known and read outside Unitarian circles. This collection of his sermons went into thirteen editions and was still in print long after the end of the century.

Had Endeavours after the Christian Life not contained a high doctrine of Christ, it is doubtful if it would ever have been read extensively by non-Unitarians. Its influence on four notable Victorians, John Colenso, William Knight, F. W. Robertson and Stopford Brooke, is evidence of this.

It was Endeavours after the Christian Life which caused John Colenso, as a young and earnest student at Cambridge, to write home enthusiastically to his fiancée about James Martineau:

I have never seen a book - I think I may say - so full of brilliant and truthful passages as this little work (not excepting even Maurice - as the former epithet) I have given you but a most feeble and unworthy idea of him - but I hope to bring it with me when I see you next - but - he is James Martineau the Unitarian ... Macmillan (the

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239. A. H. Craufurd, Recollections of James Martineau (London and Edinburgh, 1903), p.190.

bookseller) named it to me, and said that he was so moved by reading it that, knowing nothing of the author, he wrote to recommend to him Maurice's "Kingdom of Christ" ... (240)

Colenso's Natal Sermons (written some twenty-five years later) show considerable reliance upon Martineau's published sermons. (241) Although Colenso was later charged with heresy, it is doubtful if at this, or any later stage in his life he would have been enthusiastic about anything less than a high view of Christ.

The same is also true of Professor William Knight of St. Andrews who came to know Martineau through reading Endeavours after the Christian Life. (242) Knight had an orthodox view of Christ, and an exalted place for Christ in his theology. Much of their correspondence, later published in Inter Amicos and Retrospects, is centred on the work and person of Christ, and reveals not only their differences but also their many points of agreement. If Martineau had propounded a solely humanitarian doctrine of Christ, then his theology would have had little appeal to this orthodox member of the Church of Scotland.

F. W. Robertson was perhaps the most famous Anglican preacher of the Victorian era, and his sermons were still studied by Anglican ordinands in the 1920s. According to his biographer, Robertson 'read James Martineau's books with pleasure and profit. The influence of "The Endeavours after a Christian Life" can be traced through many of his sermons'. (243) In an interesting article written in 1903, John Hoatson traced the influence of Martineau's sermons on Robertson and drew the following conclusions:

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240. George W. Cox, The Life of John William Colenso D.D., 2 vols. (London, 1888), I, 39.

241. Jeff Guy, The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso, 1814-1883 (Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg, 1983), p.162.

242. William Knight, Retrospects, p.102.

243. Stopford Brooke, Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson, fifth edition (London, 1872), p.418.

Examination reveals traces of the influence of 37 out of the 43 sermons in the Endeavours upon at least 62 of the 125 published sermons of Robertson. These 62 may be thus divided: 1. Seven which could not have been what they are had the 'Endeavours' not been written. 2. Twenty-five, in which there is either strong general resemblance, or debt incurred either in one long or several shorter passages. 3. Thirty, where the resemblance though slight, is distinct, or where there is at least one short passage, the inspiration of which is undoubted. (244)

Hoatson showed that some of the ideas Robertson took from Martineau concerned the person of Christ. One example is that of Christ being the 'poetry of God':

It may be noted further, that the beautiful introduction to this particular sermon of Robertson's (The Christian Doctrine of Merit) embodying the idea that Christ is "the very poetry of God" and "all the highest truth is poetry" finds its source in "The Sphere of Silence; God's" and the preface to the second series of the Endeavours. (245)

This would suggest that Robertson to some extent was indebted to Martineau for his picture of Christ.

In writing Robertson's biography Stopford Brooke gives an indication of the importance of the divinity of Christ in Robertson's thinking; Robertson was deeply concerned that the divinity of Christ was becoming a less acceptable doctrine among thoughtful people. Brooke quotes a passage from Robertson:

Now unquestionably, the belief in the Divinity of Christ is waning among us. They who hold it have petrified it into a theological dogma without life or warmth, and thoughtful men are more and more beginning to put it aside. (246)

Because Robertson was so concerned with the divinity of Christ it would seem unlikely that he would have placed himself so much in Martineau's debt if Martineau himself had not designated an important place for Christ in

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244. John Hoatson, 'James Martineau and Frederic Robertson: A Study of Influence', Expositor, 8 (1903), 204.

245. John Hoatson, 'James Martineau and Frederic Robertson', p.212.

246. Stopford Brooke, Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson, p.417.

his own thinking. One of the attractions of Martineau for Robertson was that he considered Martineau to be both a thoughtful man and someone who had retained belief in the divinity of Christ.

Robertson's approach to Christ may be compared to that of Martineau in the following illustrations. Robertson arrived at the idea of the uniqueness of Christ as follows:

Begin as the Bible begins, with Christ the Son of Man. Begin with Him as God's character revealed under the limitations of humanity ... See Him as He was. Breathe His Spirit. After that try to comprehend His life ... when He stood alone in the solitary Majesty of Truth in Pilate's judgement-hall; when the light of the Roman soldiers' torches flashed on Kedron in the dark night, and He knew that watching was too late; when His heart-strings gave away upon the Cross ... Live with Him till He becomes a living thought - ever present - and you will find a reverence growing up which compares with nothing else in human feeling. (247)

Several years earlier Martineau had outlined his own approach to the special place of Christ in religion when he wrote in one of his sermons:

We must take possession of it as a history, before we can construct it into a system ... And who will say, that thus to interpret the history of Christ, to abandon ourselves freely to the impression of its incidents is easy? ... We must learn to walk the streets of Jerusalem, and bow with the throng in the temple courts, and cross the bridge of Kedron, and wander on the Mount of Olives ... with John in the hall of judgement; with Mary beneath the Cross ... Thus to pass behind the veil of antiquity, is the only method of rising to a genuine appreciation of the mind of Christ, or of attaining to a clear vision of the perfect religion which it enshrines. (248)

Whether or not Robertson's method was actually taken from Martineau can never finally be determined, but there is a possibility that it was; the influence of Martineau's Christology was almost certainly greater on Robertson than on any other notable preacher. However a further important example of this influence can be seen in the life of Stopford Brooke.

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247. Stopford Brooke, Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson, pp.417-18.

248. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 366-67.

The prominent place Brooke ascribed to Martineau can be perceived from the famous question he once put to Dean Stanley when discussing the widening comprehension of the Church of England: 'Will it broaden sufficiently to admit of James Martineau being made Archbishop of Canterbury?' (249) The appeal of Martineau for the younger man extended over many years, and as early as 1857, when Brooke was only twenty-five, his diary reveals that he was reading Martineau's Endeavours after the Christian Life. (250) It is interesting that when Brooke left the Church of England (not because he could no longer believe in the divinity of Christ, but because of his inability to accept the Anglican doctrinal position) the aged Martineau joined his London congregation.

There can, of course, be several reasons for the influence of one man upon another; it is probable that Martineau's Christology was not his major influence on Brooke. But it is quite possible that if Martineau had not allocated a pre-eminent place for Christ in his thinking, then his total impact on Brooke as a member of the Church of England would have been very limited. An indication of the importance of Martineau's doctrine of Christ can be seen in a sermon Brooke preached at Martineau's memorial service:

Martineau has been the best builder, among many others, of a religion bound up with Jesus Christ, rooted in the confession of the Fatherhood of God, which is agreeable to reason, and in full accord with the ethical progress of man in history. (251)

In Brooke's fine collection of sermons entitled Christ in Modern Life, there are striking resemblances to Martineau's thought on Christ. One example is the way in which both Martineau and Brooke substantiate the

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249. L. P. Jacks, Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke, 2 vols. (London, 1917), I, 324.

250. L. P. Jacks, Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke, I, 78, 119.

251. Dennis G. Wigmore-Beddoes, Yesterdays Radicals (Cambridge, 1971), p.96.

divinity of Christ. Brooke wrote:

for to me all Christianity, and all the work of Christianity can be directly traced to one central source, the fact that in Christ Jesus Humanity was revealed as divine and Divinity as human ... This doctrine I accept, and for once I must deviate into the first person, not on the authority of Church or Bible, but because I feel the necessity of it to me. (252)

It can be seen that Brooke entertained the same beliefs as Martineau in respect of a doctrine being true because he felt that it was true for himself; and like Martineau he believed that all men have the power to work out truth for themselves. Both of these ideas were important for Martineau's Christology. Moreover this passage reveals that for Brooke Christ was central to his religion. Had Martineau propounded only a vague theism, the possibility of his exerting a strong religious influence over Brooke would have been negligible.

In the same sermon Brooke quoted with approval an extract from Martineau's Endeavours after the Christian Life concerning Martineau's concept of Christ, which he conceded was very near the highest truth relating to Christ's nature:

Unitarianism has a higher truth than Theism. Listen to this passage: 'Not more clearly does the worship of a saintly soul, breathing through its window opened to the midnight, betray the secrets of its affections, than the mind of Jesus of Nazareth reveals the perfect thought and inmost love of the All-ruling God. Were he the only born - the solitary self-revelation - of the creative spirit, he could not more purely open the mind of heaven; being the very Logos - the apprehensible nature of God - which, long unuttered to the world, and abiding in the beginning with Him, has now come forth and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.' (253)

Although maintaining that this is not the absolute truth concerning Christ, Brooke did confess that 'the line which divides this statement from the

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252. Stopford Brooke, Christ in Modern Life, twentieth edition (London, 1906), p.76.

253. Stopford Brooke, Christ in Modern Life, pp.77, 78.

highest truth we accept of Christ's nature is very thin'. If Martineau had been simply a general theist with no place for Christ in his system of thought, then his influence on Brooke would have been tentative, if it had existed at all.

In addition to the four people already mentioned two others ought to be noted, Catherine and Susanna Winkworth. They belong to a slightly different category as they make no direct reference to Martineau's Christology but among their papers are letters suggesting his influence upon them. They were the daughters of an Evangelical clergyman and remained within the Church of England all their lives. A letter which Catherine wrote to Edward Hereford in 1856 suggests not only her indebtedness to Martineau, but also that she did not consider his theology 'unsafe'; nor did she feel that he truly belonged within the Unitarian movement:

I am very glad to see the Guardian. Perhaps you will think me all the more dreadfully in want of it if I own that Mr. Martineau does not seem to me so terribly 'unsafe' as he does to you. It is, I believe because I owe him a debt of gratitude myself for positive help. At a time when the slight tincture of German philosophy to be obtained through ordinary literature had so taken possession of my mind that everything else seemed giving way to it ... he was the first person who cleared away the mists, and showed me that there were great eternal pillars of truth, founded by God himself, which had stood out the world's battling, and were none the less secure because I and a few more people miss our footing on them for a while. What I admire in him is his religious philosophy, as far as I understand it, his absolute fearless truth, his singular power of appreciating other people's stand-point, and his deep conviction of the evil of sin. (254)

One of the factors which caused Catherine Winkworth to see Martineau as not being 'unsafe' would have been the important place he assigned to Christ, which was part of his religious philosophy so much admired by her.

What Catherine and Susanna Winkworth, together with a friend Emily Shaen, found in Martineau's writings was that they contained essentially

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254. Margaret Shaen, Memorials of Two Sisters: Susanna and Catherine Winkworth, p.162.



Christian thought. A letter from Emily to Catherine on the publication of Hours of Thought on Sacred Things expresses this conviction:

Mr. Martineau's last volume of sermons are beautiful and full of Christianity, but there is a tone of lofty melancholy running through them. (255)

It is doubtful whether she would have written of Martineau's sermons that they were 'full of Christianity' if he had either assigned no place for Christ within his systematic theology or had simply projected a humanitarian view of Christ.

Like F. D. Maurice, Martineau's widest influence came through his sermons and it is of importance to note that they were read beyond the confines of Unitarianism by many orthodox Christians. Their appeal was due in part to the fact that Martineau presented a religion with Christ at the centre, which emphasised the Fatherhood of God, and which was in tune with reason and ethics while retaining a deep sense of devotion. His portrayal of a religion centred on Christ, in whom the divine and the human were united, ensured a wider following for his work than would otherwise have been achieved.

3. Martineau's Christology is of importance in that it is consistent with his theology and primarily concerned with Revelation.

Martineau's Christology is of value in that it provides a consistent christological model which points from Christ to God and from Christ to man, and can easily be accommodated with the rest of his theology in a total unity. A key factor of his Christology is revelation; for in Jesus Christ the true character of God is revealed as well as the true nature of man. It is one of the strong points of his Christology that he dealt with

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255. Margaret Shaen, Memorials of Two Sisters: Susanna and Catherine Winkworth, p.325.

the problem of how revelation is to be received. He recognised that there were both an objective and a subjective side to revelation. He came to terms with the fact that not only was the character of God revealed through Jesus Christ but that such a revelation needed to be received. In this sense his Christology forms a complete entity in that he dealt with the question of how God was revealed through Christ and also with how that revelation is to be received by the individual. Martineau produced a picture of Christ, which could be recognised, through God's initiative and man's response, as the revelation of God himself.

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### Chapter 3

## JAMES MARTINEAU'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

### INTRODUCTION

Martineau's obituary in the Church Times (19 January 1900) asked why 'such rare gifts of spiritual insight did not lead to the bosom of the Church ...'. In order to answer this question the obituary offered a critique of what it saw as Martineau's 'serious defect', his failure to understand the social and historical nature of Christianity. (1) The writer suggested that Martineau's extreme individualism had prevented him from grasping the social and corporate aspects of Christianity and this in turn had resulted in a deficient doctrine of the Church.

A similar criticism appeared in the Roman Catholic Weekly Register:

His philosophy tended to isolate the individual, to lay stress not on anything corporate or eternal, as factors in the individual's life, but on the fountains of moral tone welling up within him. How these were fed and replenished, whether we can so live and die to ourselves, Dr. Martineau does not seem adequately to have considered. (2)

It is easy to see why those who were only partially acquainted with his writings formed the opinion that Martineau had no interest in the Church, for his major systematic works, Types of Ethical Theory, A Study of Religion, and The Seat of Authority in Religion, all tended to emphasise the importance of the individual. It would however be surprising that

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1. The International Journal of Ethics of April, 1900 rightly paid tribute to his understanding of the social aspects of religion. 'But Dr. Martineau also works out a deeper view when he recognises the vast importance of social life for the development of ethics and religious insight, - not "social life" merely as the organised institutions of society, but society as a common life of thought and feeling animating its members, and affording them insight into one another's real being.'
  2. Weekly Register, 19th. January, 1900.  
The obituaries in the Church Times and the Weekly Register are in sharp contrast to the generous appreciations contained in The Times (January 13th, 1900), The Manchester Guardian (January 13th, 1900), and The Daily Telegraph (January 13th, 1900), as well as The Baptist Times (January 19th, 1900), and The Sheffield Independent (January 15th, 1900).

someone who had ministered to congregations for over half a century should have had no thoughts on the church. These thoughts however were never presented systematically in one book, although in the second volume of Essays, Reviews and Addresses, Martineau did collect together some of his writings on the Church. This lack of a systematic treatment of the Church was not because he had no doctrine of the Church, but was more probably due to the fact that he never saw the organised Church as an end in itself, but only as a means to an end. Most of his writing on the Church only emerged as a response to the events and controversies through which he passed. In particular there were several notable incidents in his life which either made an impact on his doctrine of the Church, or caused him to expound that doctrine.

Martineau's childhood was predominately spent in the old English Presbyterian tradition of toleration, even though this had been significantly changed by Priestley's Unitarianism. The Octagon Chapel in Norwich had been founded on an open doctrinal principle. (3) As an old man of ninety-two, Martineau quoted from Taylor's address with approval:

This Chapel we have erected and here we intend to worship the living and true God, through one Mediator Jesus Christ; not in opposition to, but in perfect peace and harmony with all our fellow Protestants. This edifice is founded upon no party principles or tenets, but is built on purpose and with this very design, to keep ourselves clear from them all; to discharge ourselves from all the prejudices and fetters in which any of them may be held: that so we may exercise the public duties of religion upon the most Catholic and charitable foundation according to the rules and spirit of genuine Christianity. (4)

While still a schoolboy, Martineau, as we have already noted, came under the influence of Lant Carpenter, who also represented the old Presbyterian tradition within Unitarianism. In the years leading up to the

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3. John Taylor is usually included among the eighteenth-century Presbyterians, but actually he preferred the name of 'Protestant Dissenter' or 'Catholic Christian'. See H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, pp. 249-50.
  4. MS. letter of James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 5th. 1897 - Manchester College Library, Oxford.

formation of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in 1825, Carpenter prevented the conservative Unitarians from imposing credal confessions on the more liberal churches. (5) In the Western Unitarian Society he also waged a campaign against the constitution which condemned Arianism and described Trinitarianism as 'idolatrous'. (6) Martineau grew up in this broad tradition of English liberal dissent, which although modified by the prevailing Unitarianism, nevertheless made an impact upon him, especially at Bristol, where in the classroom and in the pews of Lewins Mead Chapel he was inspired by the broad sympathies of Lant Carpenter.

Martineau's four years in Dublin, from 1828 to 1832 aroused his sympathies for the members of the Roman Catholic Church. In his Biographical Memoranda he recorded how shocked and startled he was by the anti-Catholic feeling he found amongst the principal people in the Society. Together with his colleague, Joseph Hutton, he became actively involved in the campaign for Catholic emancipation:

A signature which, with my venerated colleague, I had attached to a petition for Catholic Emancipation, brought down an explosion of wrath from a blustering but not very lucid gentleman, who "had been credibly informed that ministers should not meddle with politics," but who nevertheless thought it our duty to sign on the other side.  
(7)

While he was in Ireland, Martineau was forced to consider seriously his views on the relationship of the denominational Churches to the State. This came about through the death of Philip Taylor, the retired minister of Eustace Street Presbyterian Meeting House; on Taylor's death, Martineau was expected to receive the Regium Donum, a government grant given to

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5. Ian Sellers, 'Unitarians and Social Charge', Hibbert Journal, 61 (1962), 17.

6. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, (London, 1968), p.240.

7. MS. James Martineau, 'Biographical Memoranda'. Manchester College Library, Oxford.

Presbyterian Ministers, raised from the taxation of a largely Roman Catholic population. This caused a crisis in his ministry which he described some forty years later:

Whether the theoretical objections which I then felt to any organic connection between Church and State would alone have been decisive, I cannot tell. But during my residence in Ireland, the gross injustice involved in the relative position of the Catholic Church and the two chief Protestant bodies had become so oppressive to me that the very idea of being personally participant in it affected me with shame. (8)

The congregation tried to insist that Martineau accepted the grant; Martineau refused. This predicament resulted in Martineau leaving Dublin in the summer of 1832.

During his Liverpool ministry his published works contained important references to the Church, as did his sermon of 1834, The Existing State of Theology as an Intellectual Pursuit, and Religion as a Moral Influence, in which he briefly set out his view of Christian Unity (9), and The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, where he discussed the Roman Catholic approach to tradition, and the Protestant approach to scripture. However, it was when under attack during the Liverpool Controversy of 1839 that Martineau set out in full the essence of his doctrine of the Ministry and the Sacraments in a paper entitled 'Christianity without Priest and without Ritual'. He argued that the sacraments were essentially commemorative signs, standing for ideas and memories in the mind (10), and that the character of the Christian Ministry was prophetic rather than priestly, in that it was concerned with 'faith' rather than with a sacramental and ritualistic approach to religion. (11) Martineau greatly developed these thoughts in

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8. 'Biographical Memoranda'.

9. James Martineau, The Existing State of Theology as an Intellectual Pursuit and Religion as a Moral Influence (Boston, 1835), p.22.

10. James Martineau, Christianity without Priest and without Ritual (Liverpool, 1839), p.15.

11. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.14.

his later writings, but in essence they remained unchanged.

By 1843 the central core of his doctrine of the Church was beginning to emerge in a sermon entitled, 'The Family in Heaven and on Earth'. (12) The sermon reveals some similarities to F. D. Maurice's The Kingdom of Christ (1837) in that it tended to define the Church by its centre, Christ, rather than by its circumference (as Newman might have done, in the sense of explicitly stating who was included in the Church and who was not).

One significant change in Martineau's thinking on the Church was occasioned by the Lady Hewley case, which lasted from 1830 to 1844, when the Dissenter's Chapel Act was passed. The case centred on the question of whether Unitarians, some of whom had descended from the original Presbyterians, were entitled to the proceeds of a charitable trust which had been endowed in 1704 by the Presbyterian Lady Hewley of York. (13) In order to defend their heritage and assert their historic continuity, the leaders of Unitarianism, under the direction of Mr. Robert Aspland (one of the founders of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association) formed a 'Presbyterian Association', but promptly disbanded once the case was over. The Lady Hewley case revealed to Martineau the false position into which one section of the Church had lapsed; by allowing itself to be known by a doctrinal name, 'Unitarian', it was powerless to claim doctrinal neutrality and the openness of its pulpits, and consequently it had disabled itself from defending Church-rights. (14)

Martineau's change of attitude towards the British and Foreign Unitarian Association can easily be traced. In 1834 he preached a sermon before the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and referred to it as 'the Association, whose cause I am privileged to advocate.' (15) He also

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12. James Martineau, Endeavours after the Christian Life, ninth edition (London, 1892), pp.451-462.

13. For a full discussion of this case see L. H. Short, The English Presbyterians, pp.247-253.

14. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, December 22nd, 1891.

15. The Existing State of Theology as an Intellectual Pursuit, p.22.

confessed that he played a prominent part in the establishment of the Irish Unitarian Society which had very similar aims to its British equivalent. But in 1858 he turned down the chairmanship of the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association because of his concern that Churches should not be locked into any particular doctrinal system. (16) It is suggested in an Editorial in The Christian Life that because of to Martineau's protest the practice of allowing individual churches to be represented in the Association was abandoned. (17) This would undoubtedly have met Martineau's objection at the time, which was that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was a society for private individuals who may hold a Unitarian view and not for churches, whose theology must be open to different beliefs and future changes. By 1887 Martineau was advocating the disbanding of the Association as he felt it prevented the reinstatement of Presbyterian Government among their churches. (18) His main objection to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was that it encouraged churches which should be Catholic (meaning comprehensive) to be confined within narrow doctrinal limits, thus reducing them from being a Church to mere sects. This objection was also at the heart of his controversy with the Rev. S. F. MacDonald of Chester, which will be referred to later.

Having supported Catholic Emancipation, Martineau could not oppose the restoration of a Catholic hierarchy in England in 1850. In 'The Battle of the Churches' (1851), he pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church had done nothing illegal in setting up its hierarchy and he was one of the few who argued that the most prudent response was to do nothing. An indication of the strength of feeling against the introduction of a Roman Catholic hierarchy in England can be gauged by the reactions of the Bishops of London and Durham. C. J. Bloomfield, the Bishop of London, requested his

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16. Essays, Reviews and Addresses II, 405-418.

17. The Christian Life, July 2nd, 1887.

18. James Martineau, 'Dr. Martineau on Unitarian Church Polity', The Christian Life, 13 (1887), 312.



clergy to preach against the new Catholic hierarchy, and Bishop Maltby of Durham called the actions of the Pope 'insolent and insidious'. Martineau, however used the opportunity to advocate the setting up in England of a new national Church. (19) It was his desire for inclusion and comprehension, expressed in this paper, which fired his other two major schemes for Christian Unity; The Free Christian Union (1869), and The National Church as a Federal Union (1887).

Martineau's last public debate on the Church was at 'The National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing or Kindred Congregations', held at Leeds in 1888, where he gave an address entitled, 'Suggestions on Church Organisation'. This was a desperate attempt to reverse the movement within the assembled churches towards a Unitarian denomination. He was eighty-three years of age, and the fact that he spoke for some two hours advocating a Presbyterian system of ministry and government for the Church indicates the importance he placed upon it. He was listened to courteously, but from the comments which followed in the denominational press he was obviously in a minority. (20)

In 1897 a Charles Voysey, a theist, although not a Christian, sought entry into the Unitarian Ministry. Voysey had been an Anglican clergyman who had undertaken a series of poorly-paid curacies, serving at Hull, St. Mark's Whitechapel, and Healaugh in Yorkshire. In 1864 after the Judicial Committee had acquitted Williams and Wilson of the charges arising out of the Essays and Reviews controversy, Voysey began to publish his own liberal sermons. As a consequence he was tried by the Judicial Committee and found guilty of denying the inspiration of the scriptures, salvation, Christ's divinity, and the doctrine of the Trinity. He subsequently established his own theistic church in Langham Place, London, where he attracted a large

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19. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 189.

20. See The Christian Life, 1888, p.210 and Brooke Herford on Martineau's scheme of Church Organisation, The Christian Life, 1888, p.392.

congregation. The Rev. Valentine Davis wrote to Martineau, apparently to elicit support for Voysey's candidature. Martineau wrote two letters in reply; these two unpublished letters, opposing Voysey's entry into the Unitarian ministry, contain the clearest exposition of Martineau's Christocentric doctrine of the Church, (21) which will be discussed later.

Martineau's doctrine of the Church was formulated out of these personal experiences, but also in the context of a Christian Community in England which was subject to immense movement and cross currents. If Claude Welch is right in defining a revolutionary epoch in Christian thought as stretching from Schleiermacher's Speeches of 1799 to the First World War, then Martineau's working life, from his first publication of 1829 to his last in 1897, spanned the large central section of it. It was against this revolutionary background of Church Reform and the Oxford Movement, of Catholic emancipation and Strauss's Life of Jesus, of the Impact of Darwinism and Essays and Reviews, of the many schemes of Church union and the growth of the denominational structures, that Martineau developed his doctrine of the Church. He was aware of the challenge to the Church implicit in the harsh realities of the mushroom-growth towns of industrial England, and the unbelievable poverty of rural Ireland. His sermons were seldom arbitrary expositions of scripture, but were often written in response to the questions and movements of the time.

This is also true for Martineau's general writings on the Church; they were never mere academic exercises, but were almost always penned in response to some situation or need. Taken as a whole what emerges is not a series of isolated and disjointed papers, even though they were written over three-quarters of a century, but a well thought-out, systematic and consistent view of the Church, which has some relevance to our contemporary situation.

Martineau's doctrine of the Church will be considered in four major sections. In the first section I will examine Martineau's view of the

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21. See Appendix B.

essential nature of the Church. The second section will explore Martineau's concept of the development of doctrine and its implications for his idea of the Catholic Church, and for his schemes of Church Union. The third section will be concerned with the sacraments, the ministry, and Church organisation. Finally the question will be discussed as to whether or not Martineau's doctrine of the Church did mark a turning point in the history of Unitarianism.

## THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

### The Church Defined By Its Centre

To Martineau the centre of the Church was Jesus Christ, and his discussions of the Church start from this point. This was perhaps most clearly asserted in his last two surviving letters of a long correspondence with the Rev. Valentine Davis. Writing from his London home at 35, Gordon Square, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, Martineau reviewed some of the events of his own long life, and several incidents in the history of the Church: these supported his contention, held throughout his writings, that it was impossible to have a Church without Christ. The very word 'church' belonged to Christianity and 'was born with Christian literature, and finds its meaning exclusively in Christian institutions.'<sup>(22)</sup> For Martineau the Church was a distinctively Christian organisation, <sup>(23)</sup> and although he acknowledged that the trust deeds of his own group of the Protestant Dissenting Churches were extremely liberal, he argued that 'the forms of expression employed invariably assumed discipleship to Christ.'<sup>(24)</sup>

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22. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 5th. 1897, Oxford.

23. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 29th. 1897.

24. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 5th. 1897.

The centrality of Christ is found in James Montgomery's hymn,  
significantly included in Martineau's third hymn book:

We bid thee welcome in the name,  
Of Jesus our exalted head: .. (25)

But Christ was not merely the human focus of a human organisation. At the heart of Martineau's doctrine of the Church was the belief that the Christian faith required the recognition 'of something supernatural in the life of Christ', which went beyond human understanding, and that those who failed to recognise this supernaturalness of Christ, could not be counted as his proper disciples. (26) As early as 1845 he had written:

Whoever sees in Christ, not an original source of truth and goodness, but only a product of something else, is destitute of the attitude of mind constituting religious discipleship. (27)

Martineau did not relate this divine aspect of Christ principally to his works, but rather to his person. He maintained that Christ did not make disciples predominantly through what he had done for them, but by what he was in himself. (28) It was a theme which found an echo in a sermon he preached at the Induction Service of the Rev. Alexander Gordon:

It is not the story of Jesus, not his picture, not his doctrine that redeems us; not anything set off at a distance and taken at second-hand: all this first becomes a spiritual power when it carries us past itself into that intimate union with God which it exhibits as our true life. (29)

Martineau also taught that the Church itself was not a thing made or

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25. James Martineau, Hymns of Praise and Prayer (London, 1876), No. 733.

26. James Martineau, National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, (London, 1903), pp.217-18.

27. James Martineau, The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, third edition, (London 1845), p.vii.

28. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.344.

29. James Martineau, The Charge to the Minister and Congregation, in The Service at Hope Street Church, Liverpool on the Occasion of the Induction of the Rev. Alexander Gordon (London, Liverpool, and Manchester, 1864), p.13.

designed by mankind or controlled solely through human will, but existed as a 'Divine fact' in the world. (30)

From the first-century to this day there has truly existed the august and embodied Form of a pure religion; an outward Christendom, fast held together, as if clasped by the almighty hand through convulsion of the world, and borne aloft over the time-waves that have wrecked all else ... (31)

### The Church as the Christian Community

A prominent idea in Martineau's writings is that of the Church as a living fellowship, in communion with God and brought into being through Christ. He maintained that ideally the spirit of Christ dwelt in the life of each disciple, and that the image of Christ served as a light which encouraged each noble aspiration. (32) In his address on 'The Living Church through Changing Creeds', Martineau spoke of the Church as those meaning to be loyal to God 'brought into a conscious community by Christ'. (33) On other occasions he referred to the Church as those who should be united in the love of Christ, (34) or as a gathering together of the Lord's disciples. He insisted that the word 'church' denoted 'nothing either before or beyond the range of his community.' (35) Martineau's initial view of the Church was similar to that of the Dominican Theologian, Yves Congar, who a century later, exerted an important influence on the thinking of the Second Vatican Council. In Lay People in the Church (1965) Congar

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30. James Martineau, 'The Living Church through Changing Creeds', The Theological Review, 3 (1866), 296.

31. MS. James Martineau, 'St. Paul's Doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments', unpublished sermon of 1841 in Manchester College Library, Oxford.

32. James Martineau, Hours of Thought on Sacred Things 2 vols. (London, 1876 and 1879), II, 380.

33. 'The Living Church through Changing Creeds', The Theological Review, 3 (1866), 296.

34. MS. letter of James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, December 22nd. 1891, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

35. MS. letter to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 29th, 1897.

developed the idea of the Church as a fellowship of persons, a fellowship of human beings with God, and with one another in Christ, and he held that the Church itself was a means by which this fellowship was produced and maintained.

It follows from this that Martineau's doctrine of the Church was not simply concerned with the individual and his relationship to God, facilitated through Jesus Christ, but also with the Church as a corporate body. Martineau was sometimes accused (as the obituary from the Church Times demonstrates) of being too individualistic, but in fact he did have a strong sense of the Christian community; and he criticised extreme individualism which he felt undermined the corporate nature of the Church. He argued from a theological basis, and from a practical point of view, against individualism.

On theological grounds he argued that a Christian's life was not his own to do with as he willed, but that he belonged to a 'holy society'. The image he used was from weaving:

we belong to a holy Society, into which we are woven in many a fibre, and must beware lest we spoil and stiffen the pattern of its beauty: (36)

He also held that the individual's conscience and inner feelings were not the only factors that determined Christian behaviour; respect was also needed for the consciences of others, without which the individual could become a bigot:

My whole protest ... has been directed from first to last against the unwarrantable licence of Individualism, and the selfish usurpation of temporary opinions, encroaching on what is not theirs: my whole desire has been to restore some restraints of reverence for rights other than our own: for a future beyond our reparations; for the Church of Christ that embraces us; for the Providential Laws of our humanity. (37)

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36. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 403.

37. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 403.

From a practical point of view, Martineau argued that no one thoroughly believed or disbelieved alone by himself, but that every person needed the sympathy of others to confirm his own secret feelings. If our own beliefs and feelings were not confirmed by others then we might well begin to suspect that we were deluded. Faith was not an individual property, but a thing of 'Catholic Consent'. For Martineau religion could never be a purely individual thing between the worshipper and God; he saw it much more in terms of a triangular relationship connecting individuals with each other and with God.

Faith is not less an intercommunion and mutual confession of souls with each other, than of all with the Father of spirits. (38)

The Christian Church was not limited simply to an earthly fellowship, but contained an historical community of former generations linked to those living in the present, and a community in heaven which was joined to Christians on earth. This total church community was made possible by Christ and held together by him. Martineau took St. Paul's thought of one family distributed between heaven and earth (Ephesians 3: 14-15) and developed it as a key theme of his doctrine of the Church. He held that the disciples were closer to Jesus when he was physically no longer with them: it was Christ who united those in heaven and on earth in one family, and it was his spirit which drew people together in the community of the Church: (39)

Blessed communion of earth with Heaven! making us truly one family, below, above; and rendering us fellow-citizens with the saints, and the very household of God! (40)

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38. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 175.

39. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.451-52.

40. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.145.

In Martineau's thought there was this strong emphasis upon the historical nature of the church. He was conscious that much had been inherited from the past and of a debt owed to great Christians of former ages. One could attribute these feelings to Victorian emotions, but with Martineau it was much more a deep sense of an historical continuity in the Church. This continuity he found especially through the singing of hymns that had been left by former generations as a record of their communion with God. It was his belief in the universal experience of mankind which enabled him to identify with the confessions and struggles and desires of those who had lived in a previous age, and to re-affirm his belief (in an adaptation of 1 John 1:7) that 'the light that gladdened them, shines now upon our hearts.' (41)

#### The Function Of The Church

In Martineau's scheme of thought the underlying function of the disciples of Christ was to 'imitate' his spirit (42) and to carry on a great mission in remembrance of him. On one occasion Martineau referred to this 'mission' as having been entrusted to them by Christ, (43) and on another as having been assigned to their religion by Providence. (44) Although he did not state precisely what this mission was, it would be reasonable to assume that it coincided with his general view of the office of religion, which was to encourage in people:

their purest veneration and their worthiest love, by embodying for them what they inwardly know to be holiest, and reminding them of what they feel to be best. (45)

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41. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.144.

42. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.194.

43. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.329.

44. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.194.

45. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 69.



In addition to this general function Martineau held that the Church had three other responsibilities; those of worship, of education, and of being a visible witness to invisible and heavenly things. These ideas will be examined in ascending order of importance.

The idea of the visible Church and indeed of its buildings, had a prominent part to play in Martineau's ecclesiology as can be seen by the care and concern he lavished on the building of Hope Street Church, Liverpool. He held the conviction that as well as Christian influence coming through Church representation and individual lives, the visible church itself also exerted an influence. This influence could be most effectively exercised by crowding 'the pavement of the Church' with old and young people; by singing hymns in worship which would 'blend soul with soul, and carry all to God', and by letting the very building itself 'stand by night and day a silent witness to the world of invisible and heavenly things'. (46)

The Church as an institution had a responsibility to provide for worship and education. (47) He was writing in 1845 when there was no state primary or secondary education, and the conditions of entry to Oxford and graduation from Cambridge were limited to those who could subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles; thus it could be argued that his inclusion of education in the functions of the Church was merely to fill a gap in state provision. However this seems unlikely when it is recognised that, for Martineau, the truth revealed by education was not something secular which stood over and against religion, but was itself complementary to religion. Thus the discoveries wrought by education did not distract from a central divine authority, but were also part of the scheme of God. (48) In addressing his students at the Valedictory service of 1880 he said:

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46. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 5.

47. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 43.

48. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.424-25.

your studies, instead of overshadowing and dwarfing your Religion, are taken up into it, to give it their dimensions, to suffuse it with their intellectual light, and receive from it the fervour of its reverence and love. The whole theory and practice of our relation to each other rest on the conception that to the Christlike mind nothing is secular; that a universal gospel embraces all human interests, of thought and character, of person and society, of art and letters, of the present and past; (49)

With this concept of education, as a process that enriched religion, it is not difficult to see why Martineau held the view that education was a proper function of the Church and not of the state. It must also be added that Martineau, like the saintly Bishop Edward King of Lincoln, was opposed to early attempts to introduce elements of a welfare state, because he believed that such moves would stifle personal initiative.

Worship, however, was the primary function of the Church. Writing to Francis Newman in 1854 he said that without worship the Church became just a club or a society. (50) Eleven years later he wrote to Mr. E. Talbot, urging a return to the central principles of the Christian community, which he saw as, 'the worship of God as disciples of Christ.' (51) For Martineau, worship was central to his view of the Church because it embodied what was of primary importance in that it brought the human spirit close to the Spirit of God.

In Christian worship, through all its confessions of estrangement, there runs the undertone of near communion between the human spirit and the Divine. (52)

Worship was also of importance for Martineau's schemes of Christian unity, which depended upon the mutual feeling and fellowship aroused by worship, rather than on any doctrinal agreement.

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49. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.421.

50. J. E. Carpenter, James Martineau (London, 1905), p.443.

51. MS. letter from James Martineau to E. Talbot, September, 21st. 1866, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

52. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 335.

It might well be asked why Martineau's writings on the function of the Church, like those of Schleiermacher, (53) were limited to ecclesiastical concerns and did not venture into the realms of politics or social concern. This does at first seem rather surprising for Martineau who was himself so keenly involved in the social and welfare institutions of his time, and who preached sermons on the rights of war, and on famine in Ireland. Yet the reason for this apparent limitation was not that he believed that Christianity was concerned only with spiritual and ecclesiastical matters, for he held that Christianity penetrated the whole of life. Martineau's reluctance to identify any further functions of the Church stemmed from the conviction that Christianity added no new duties or responsibilities to those which every person was able to discern inwardly:

In the highest minds religion has no separate duties of its own, but is the spirit which should impregnate all duty: it changes the direction of no obligation, but gives intensity to the force of all: it has no rivalry with any pure affection, but befriends and consecrates them all. Under its influence, therefore, life is not essentially changed in character, but simply hopes more, loves more, aspires more. (54)

#### The Church: an Inclusive Society

If Martineau's view of the Church can be described as a circle with a clearly defined centre, Jesus Christ, it is a circle without a circumference, which would make it exclusive, or indeed without any segments, which would separate the denominations. All the reference points were taken from the centre, Jesus Christ. This open nature of the Church stemmed from the fact that Christ was its head. He united his disciples, brought together the 'good' of every age, and formed them into the family of God: (55)

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53. Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, (Edinburgh, 1928), p.5.

54. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 87-8.

55. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.458, 461.

Thus is there a fraternity formed that disowns the restrictions of place and time; a Church of Christ that passes the bounds of Christendom. (56)

Martineau vividly illustrated his view of the Church, reaching outside the bounds of Christendom, in an impressive analogy of a great choral work which involved the whole of humanity; the disciples of Christ alone knew the words, but the voices of the 'great and good' of every age, such as Socrates and Plato, richly mingled as supporting instruments, filling in the melody. It is one of the strong points of Martineau's ecclesiology that he attempted to work out the relationship of the Church to the world in this way. In contrast to his approach it was one of the weaknesses of the Tractarians that they never really tackled this issue. Martineau's all-inclusive nature of the Church sprang from his understanding of the nature of Christ, whom he held 'denies to none a hope for all'. (57) Thus Martineau refuses to place a circle round Christ's disciples and round all the good and noble people throughout history:

Even this wide friendship need not entirely close the circle of our fraternity. Beyond the company of the great and good a vast and various crowd is scattered round: no line must be drawn which they are forbidden to pass: (58)

This doctrine has a resemblance to the ecclesiology of F. D. Maurice. Both men defined the Church by locating Christ at its centre, and, because of their reluctance to draw lines which excluded people, tended to have a doctrine of the Church which was a little blurred at the edges. Maurice portrayed Christ as the head of the whole human race, whereas Martineau tended to see Christ as the head of a family, to which everyone was entitled to belong, even though there were some 'outcast members'. He argued against any secret initiation which would erect barriers and prevent entry into this 'Christian brotherhood' or family:

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56. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.460.

57. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.460-61.

58. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.461.

Christ will not remain the head of the 'whole family' if its forlorn and outcast members are simply put away in selfish shame ... (59)

Martineau drew his authority for an inclusive Church from the earthly life and teaching of Jesus. He maintained that any exclusive form of Christianity made the disciples more fastidious than the Master, and indeed, was a rejection of those whom God had received. He cited in support of his theory the gospel account of a Jew who came to Jesus and asked what were the conditions of everlasting life: Jesus did not lay down new rules or conditions but simply referred to the 'old law' written on tablets of stone and in the human heart:

and when the Israelite himself, with true selection, had cited thence the two great commandments of Love, the problem was solved, and the answer came: "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke X.28). (60)

Martineau held that the same inclusive attitude should be at work in the contemporary church:

Those who think that Jesus Christ, if among us now, would take no notice of such men as F. W. Newman and Keshub Chunder ... must read the lineaments of his spirit more strangely than the author of "Phases of Faith" himself. (61)

Martineau argued that if it was the character of the Religion of Christ to be unexclusive, then a Christian necessarily had an affinity with all the devout and righteous, irrespective of nation and sect. (62) Thus for Martineau a vital characteristic of the Christian Church was an

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59. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.461.

60. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 514.

61. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 514.  
Keshub Chunder Sen, the leader of the Brahmo Somaj of India, visited England in 1870. Martineau was impressed by his spirituality. He formed a 'Theistic Society' which had the aim of uniting people of different creeds.

62. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 514.

all-inclusiveness which crossed intellectual and social distinctions, and moreover was not limited by race or geographical boundaries. In a vivid contrast between Christianity and Judaism, Martineau emphasised this universal and inclusive nature of Christianity:

Judaism is national, Christianity is universal; religion in the one is concentrated into the kingdom of Israel, in the other widened into the kingdom of heaven; works in the one upon the map of this world, amid an historic people, on the margin of great empires, and along the lines of spreading colonization; stands in the other neutral to the distinctions of race and the vicissitudes of destiny, and speaks only to the spirit that is alike in all. (63)

Martineau vigorously opposed figures such as the Bishop of Exeter, Phillpotts, who constructed schemes which excluded others from a relationship with God. He pointed out that if the exclusive attitude of the Bishop of Exeter was rigorously applied it would impoverish the Christian Church, by thinning its libraries, decimating its literature, and excluding many who had made important contributions to its life and thought, such as Tillotson, Butler, Berkeley and Lowth. (64) Martineau was criticising not only the Church of England for its exclusiveness; he recognised that the Dissenting Churches also erected barriers which prevented people from joining them. One of his many objections to the name Unitarian being applied to a church, was that it formed an exclusive sect. The application of such a name he wrote to J. H. Thom, 'must always act as a creed of exclusion against those who cling to the Incarnation or any form of Trinity.' (65) In contrast to this attitude he greatly admired the old Presbyterian Churches who insisted on a 'non-exclusive Christianity'. (66)

It may appear that Martineau's view of the Church was so wide that the

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63. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.2.

64. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 50.

65. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, p.449.

66. James Martineau, The Church of the Future, (Liverpool, 1871), p.6.

world and the Church were synonymous terms. The answer is that it was not, and yet it was. It was not, in the sense that the Church consisted of the disciples of Christ; it was, in the sense that the Church should be open to all, and that the world was not 'in opposition' to the Church. It could also be argued that there was a contradiction between Martineau's earlier and later writings: that whereas in his earlier works he seems to be contending for a totally open church, in some of his later writings he seems to be confining the Church to the disciples of Christ. For example, when he addressed the National Conference in 1888 Martineau cited with approval his forerunners who on founding their places of worship held it inadmissible 'to introduce into the terms of membership any conditions but such as are owned by every disciple of Christ.' (67) This seems to imply that Martineau was limiting the Church, and his two letters to the Rev. Valentine Davis (68) mentioned previously would appear to support this contention. Any apparent inconsistency can be resolved when it is recognised that Martineau was fundamentally advocating a broad, inclusive Church of all who offered allegiance to Christ as its head. Around this group Martineau believed no line should be drawn or barrier erected which would exclude others. With this inclusiveness went a recognition, that those who were not directly disciples of Christ may still be co-partners in some great enterprise, and moreover that the followers of Christ had a responsibility to extend sympathy and gentle care to all. (69)

#### CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND SCHEMES OF UNION

In 1891 Martineau wrote a long letter to Valentine Davis in which he confessed that as a young man he had been convinced there was only one

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67. James Martineau, Suggestions on Church Organisation (Manchester, 1888), pp.28-29.

68. March 5th. 1897, and March 29th. 1897.

69. Endeavours after the Christian Life, P.461.

right way of thinking, and that like-minded people who adhered to it were consequently right:

This genuine dogmatic principle, - the principle of orthodoxy, - everywhere prevailing, made church differ from church just according as our doxy differed from your doxy, and took for granted the presence, by an act of collective thinking, of one and the same doxy among all the members of a single church. (70)

Before he reached middle age Martineau had changed his mind on three of these things. He came to believe that truth was many-sided and could be seen from several different perspectives. He gave up the idea of any form of Christian orthodoxy, whether in the Church of England or among Unitarians, and he abandoned the belief that there was, or needed to be, collective agreement on matters of doctrine by the members of a church. The resultant change had important implications for Martineau's doctrine of the Church, and for his principles of Christian unity.

#### Martineau's Perception of Christian Doctrine

Martineau began his reformulated theory of Christian doctrine with the conviction that all belief and speech respecting God is 'untrue'. (71)

This conviction was founded on the thought that religious truth was concerned with things infinite, which go beyond human experience, and therefore cannot be correctly apprehended by the human mind:

Our truest faiths, then, are in - not the truth, but our most happy modes of representing the still absent truth to ourselves; modes either self-acquired, or imparted by revelation. All these modes are but symbols of the great reality; more or less noble, solemn, sublime; and in this respect only, more or less true. (72)

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70. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, December 20th. 1891. Manchester College Library, Oxford.

71. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.15.

72. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, pp.224-25.



Thus our thoughts about God are 'substitutes' or 'approximations' for the actual truth which our finite minds cannot comprehend. (73) This sense of all our ideas about God being merely approximations is not just because our finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite, but also because the 'gift of God in Christ' has to be apprehended by our own finite faculties which have a tendency to err, (74) and the result has no greater certainty than would be expected from human inference, language, and interpretation:

When, of two equally competent students, one finds, in the records of the Primitive Church, a hierarchy of spiritual officers, and the other an equality, the tenure of their respective convictions is exactly the same; and for a decisive verification they must wait for further evidence.  
(75)

Martineau not only maintained that our understanding is affected by a lack in our ability to comprehend infinite truths, but he also held that a further degree of error is introduced when we try to articulate those truths. He thus differentiated between a belief and a doctrine:

Can it be needful to point out the distinction between "belief," an inward state of the human mind, and a "creed," a "doctrine," a "dogma," the verbal definition of that state? (76)

There are two processes between revelation and doctrine: revelation has to be received by the human faculties and it has to be expressed verbally before it becomes doctrine. Between revelation and doctrine lie the fallibilities of human apprehension and human language. Martineau's argument was that as a consequence of those two processes the resulting doctrine is only an approximation to the original revelation. He did not, however, believe that all faiths were equal, but that there was a need to distinguish between different kinds of faith on the basis of how accurately

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73. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, p.225.

74. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 546.

75. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 546-47.

76. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 510.

they approximated to the truth. But who decides which approximation to the truth is the most accurate? Martineau's answer would be that the individual must search his conscience for the answer, comparing it with the received answers of the community of Christian disciples. A more important distinction for Martineau was that between faith, and no-faith, for while 'we all of us misconceive the reality, they only contradict it who have no-faith'. (77)

Even though he acknowledged that the final doctrines may become distorted in the process of translation from revelation to doctrine, Martineau asserted that churchmen still have a responsibility to articulate their belief in doctrinal terms. It was not the duty of the corporate body of the Church to perform this function by prescribing conditions of membership, or setting out a detailed catechism; it was the prerogative of the individual Christian to do this for himself:

for individual believers definite theological conviction is important to the spiritual life. (78)

Martineau's stance on doctrine raises several important questions. Is doctrine merely an approximation to the truth, and is it really as subjective as Martineau seems to have implied? Is there such a thing as heresy in his system? Moreover Martineau's approach raises the key question as to whether we can know God as he really is, or only as we perceive him to be.

The problem of heresy was not a major one for Martineau because he believed that there was no orthodoxy, in the sense of detailed, fixed and eternal opinions about God and his creation and redemption of the world: he held that Christianity was a progressive venture of faith, kept on course by the person and character of Christ. Not believing in orthodoxy, it was difficult for him to believe in heresy; he did in fact hold that all

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77. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, p.225.

78. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 381.

religious beliefs were 'infinitely truer than any non-belief and silence'.(79) However, Martineau, when founding the Free Christian Union, did acknowledge that there must be some fixed points of theological agreement as a ground for any religious union:

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is:" and if twenty people come to God they must agree in believing that He is. (80)

He refused to allow Christian fellowship to be limited by detailed theological agreement, which he felt was impossible to achieve.

### The Church as a Living Community

One of the factors which undoubtedly influenced Martineau's view of doctrine was his concept of the Church as a living community which was open to growth, change and development. He graphically enforced this view by likening the Church to a living forest with sap rising through its branches, in contrast to a stone obelisk with the creeds carved upon it. (81) Martineau had a strong sense of the Church's continuity, and feared that this continuity would be broken by the Church becoming locked into a fixed doctrinal position:

In all that relates to our permanent Church-life, whether in our separate congregations or in our action as a denomination, we should look beyond our own horizon, and avoid identifying ourselves with a particular phase of doctrinal change. (82)

He argued for this position on the basis that the Church had an unbroken continuity with the past, from which it must not be cut off, and also that the present members of the Church had a responsibility not to limit the

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79. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.15.

80. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 510.

81. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.28.

82. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 413.

doctrinal expression of future generations. He expressed this concern in a letter to S. F. MacDonald of Chester:

You must provide for the development of doctrine into forms divergent from your own; as you also have receded in belief from forerunners whose memorials are in your grave-yards and on your chapel-walls. (83)

Although one of Martineau's aims in his correspondence with S. F. MacDonald was to prevent the Liberal Dissenting Churches forming a Unitarian Denomination, his work expressed a wider concern for the Catholic Church as a living community. A criticism of the Evangelicals, which he shared with Francis Newman, (84) was that they resisted change and development. Martineau wrote of Evangelicalism:

Its creed, an endless chain of inflexible links, could only revolve in the same technical groove, and could apply itself to no resistance that lay outside of its meridian. (85)

Faced with the problem of guarding continuity, the Church, according to Martineau, could choose between two alternatives; it could prohibit development of thought and thus set up an 'orthodoxy', or it could treat that development of thought as a 'blossoming of its very life and essence' and thus provide for it. (86) In a short paper entitled 'The Living Church through changing Creeds,' Martineau emphasised his view that growth and development were part of the very nature of the Church. (87)

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83. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 382.

84. Letter of Francis Newman to James Martineau, October 1847, Manchester College Library, Oxford.  
Newman wrote, 'But our Evangelicals go round like a Squirrel in a cage; and however actively they step, rise not an inch higher. It is shocking to hear many boast that they hold fast to the precise round of doctrine which they received on their first conversion, as if perfection consists in receiving no new light.'

85. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, I, 222.

86. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.28.

87. The Theological Review, 3 (1866), 296-306.

## Change and Development in Christian Doctrine

Alongside Martineau's view of the Church as a living community in a changing world, went the idea of change and development in doctrine. In his address at the induction of the Rev. Alexander Gordon, Martineau made a plea for progressive religious thought, which he judged to be essential if the faith of the Church was to survive and keep abreast of the contemporary movements of thought:

Though the Christian religion is not a philosophy but a life, yet life also has its intellectual side, and ferments with the movement of thought, as well as the stir of work: ... Is Faith to be outstripped and left behind in those silent and solemn fields of speculation? Must all sanctity and tenderness and trust stop short, and lie down in faintness on the last dust of the noisy present? No! wherever thought can go, panting and struggling for another step, religion can draw a quiet breath, and spread a light of safety and sweetness on the way. (88)

Some ten years before the writers of Essays and Reviews shook English Christianity in their attempt to accommodate the Christian faith to modern learning, Martineau was advocating that the gap, or as he called it 'the broad chasm' between the Church and the world must be closed. (89) Martineau's belief that faith and feeling were progressive, and that the Creeds were transitory, (90) came from a conviction that in a living world fixed doctrines were an indication of a dead faith:

The organisation of dogma is symptomatic of the dissolution of faith; it is an unwholesome mushroom growth from the rotting leaves now fallen from the tree of life. (91)

Martineau's distrust of rigid dogmatic schemes of faith led him to conclude that there was no 'orthodox' position on Christianity. He asked of those who held the contrary view, 'At what point in the scale of doubt does

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88. The Charge to the Minister and Congregation on the Occasion of the Induction of the Rev. Alexander Gordon, p.15.

89. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 86.

90. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.189-497.

91. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 77.

excommunication take place?' Can the Mass be questioned, but not the Real Presence, or the Real Presence but not the Trinity?

Endless confusion arises from the assumption that Christianity is identical with some "orthodoxy" of thought, instead of being a principle of spiritual life, a peculiar type of conscious relation between humanity and God, revealed and infused by the Divine ministry of Jesus Christ. (92)

In denouncing the idea of an 'orthodox' faith, Martineau commended the stand of a previous generation of Liberal Dissenters who had refused to entertain a concept of orthodoxy and had been unwilling to place outside the Divine Love and Christian communion those whose thoughts differed from their own. (93) Martineau was more concerned with change than with linear development. He acknowledged that often changes concerned removal of dogmatic elements, rather than addition to, and development of, existing ideas. (94)

Martineau's ideas on the development of Christian doctrine contrasted sharply with those of John Henry Newman. In his Essay on the Development of Doctrine Newman emphasised continuity, maintaining that new doctrines, with all their innovations, were still closely connected to what had gone before. He also had a fixed idea of where development was leading; to the doctrines taught by the Roman Church. Martineau had no such motive and consequently did not hold an idea of correct doctrines located in any fixed matrix. The changes he envisaged came about as a result of an increased knowledge of the world, a development of human personality and understanding, and new insights of the community. However, there were two constant factors which provided for continuity in this process of change: the Eternal Spirit of God, and, on the part of the Christian, his 'fealty to Christ, and filial union in him with God'. (95)

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92. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 518-19.

93. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.28.

94. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 518.

95. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.28.

Martineau made several observations on doctrine which subsequently had a bearing on his view of the Catholic Church and on his approach to Christian union. He was firmly convinced that it was disagreements about doctrine which spoiled the work of the Church and prevented good people from joining together to fight the real evils of the day:

But alas! we are so afraid of each other's doctrines, that we cannot cure each others sins; and while the most appalling evils threaten us, and more than once the symptomatic smoke has puffed up from the social volcano, we stand round the crater and discuss theology ... Which, I would know, is the worse evil, an actual gin-shop, or a possible heresy? Yet in dread of the latter, we cannot unite together in the only means of putting down the former. (96)

Believing that doctrines were simply human interpretations of divine things, Martineau held that if Christians lived together in humility and trust, following their own sanctities with the least possible chafing against those of others, they would find that their sanctities all run into each other and led 'to the very mind of Christ'. (97) In his own life he tried to follow this principle: in his approach to the doctrine of the Trinity, he maintained that new insights into this doctrine had reduced the importance of the Unitarian controversy:

Better insight into the origin and meaning of the Trinitarian scheme, more philosophical appreciation of its leading terms - Substance, Personality, Nature, etc. - and more sympathetic approach to the minds of living believers in it, have greatly modified our estimates, and disinclined many of us to make the rejection of the doctrine, any more than its acceptance, a condition of church communion. (98)

Although Martineau felt that there would never be universal agreement among Christians in one form of doctrine, he confessed that when he studied the beliefs of others in a spirit of sympathy rather than controversy, he was

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96. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.326.

97. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 549.

98. The Inquirer, August 27th. 1859, 764.

more able to grasp the truths they contained. (99) It was a practice he commended to others.

#### Martineau's Whitsuntide Sermon and his Controversy with S. F. MacDonald

Martineau's approach to Christian doctrine, that it was a human interpretation of an eternal reality, enabled him to promote the idea of a Christian Catholic Church which comprehended a wide variety of differing opinions. He used the word 'Catholic' to mean 'comprehensive'. In the late 1850s two events occurred which gave wide publicity to his view of a Catholic Church. The first was his sermon preached on Whitsunday in the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, in its centenary year, 1856; and the second was his controversy with S. F. MacDonald, a Unitarian minister in Chester, in which Martineau won over MacDonald to his point of view.

Martineau's Whitsuntide sermon was an exposition of Acts 2 : 4-6, and was entitled 'One Gospel in many Dialects'. The essence of the sermon was that there are real diversities between people which lie deep in human nature, but there is also a fundamental unity, because God is one, truth is one and the Gospel is one. The Christian needs to acknowledge that his own faith is just one of the dialects which interprets the true Gospel. It is Christ who corrects and enlarges all the separate and partial understandings of the truth. (100)

Martineau's controversy with MacDonald resulted from a speech Martineau made to the London and District Unitarian Society meeting at Radley's Hotel on Thursday 27th May, 1858. At that gathering the Rev. T. Madge had given an address in which he maintained that it was impossible to form a Christian Church without considerable uniformity of opinion. He was thinking especially of a Unitarian Church. Martineau made a speech in reply which was reported fully in The Inquirer of the following day:

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99. J. Estlin Carpenter James Martineau, p.226.

100. Studies of Christianity, pp.399-413.



The only question he attempted to raise was not with respect to the duty of individuals, but with respect to the principles upon which our worshipping societies should be constituted; whether upon some sort of doctrinal basis, with the view to the propagation of distinctive doctrinal sentiments, or whether they should be intended to embrace the common basis of Christian life, leaving an open theology that might change within these limits ... It did seem to him that our true course was to adhere to the broad principle which we had inherited and to rest upon it. (101)

In the following December, MacDonald published an article in The Christian Reformer, under the title 'The Unitarian Position', in which he criticised Martineau's Catholic views and advocated a Unitarian denomination with a Unitarian creed. (102)

Something of Martineau's kindly nature was revealed by the fact that he did not make this into a public confrontation, but replied to MacDonald in a private letter. MacDonald was so impressed by it that he asked the editor of The Inquirer to publish it. It appeared on August 27th, 1859, under the same title as MacDonald's original article, 'The Unitarian Position'. The thrust of Martineau's argument can be summed up in his own words:

It is the conscious sameness of spiritual relations that constitutes a Church; it is the temporary concurrence in theological opinion that embodies itself in a creed and makes a Sect in the proper sense. The very life and soul of the former, so far as we are concerned, is in the feeling and proclamation of unity in spite of difference. The essence of the latter is in the accentuation of difference amid unity, ... (103)

Although this letter converted MacDonald to Martineau's point of view, it brought in its wake a storm of criticism which Martineau felt obliged to answer. He thus wrote a further letter which was published under the title 'Church Life or Sect Life', in the hope of clarifying his position. In

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101. The Inquirer, May 29th. 1858, 355.

102. S. F. MacDonald, 'The Unitarian Position', The Christian Reformer, 14 (1858), 719-728.

103. James Martineau, 'The Unitarian Position', The Inquirer, August 27th. 1859, 763.

this letter he argued against the English Nonconformist Churches being represented by any doctrinal organisation. He also strongly opposed the adoption of any name which would distinguish Nonconformist Churches from the General Christian Church, unless it reflected their origin or their refusal to limit the grace of God in Christ to any doctrinal conditions. (104)

There is a sad footnote to this controversy which initially appeared to have been so successful from Martineau's point of view, for it aroused a great deal of opposition from a growing number of those who rejected Martineau's catholic ideas and wished to form a Unitarian denomination. No doubt some of these were among the people whom Catherine Winkworth had observed assembling in Manchester to oppose Martineau's full-time appointment to Manchester New College. There is a melancholy reference to the hostility he received at that time in a letter he wrote to a ministerial colleague, the Rev. J. Robertson:

I am the poorer for your scruple about writing to me respecting the MacDonald affair. The universal disappointment with which I was visited at that time disheartened me not a little, and determined me to withdraw as much as possible from all ecclesiastical relations and spend myself entirely on the limited sphere of duties to which I am pledged. (105)

But Martineau could never stand on the sidelines for long and was quickly drawn into other ecclesiastical controversies. From these two incidents in his life, the Norwich sermon, and the MacDonald affair, an outline can be ascertained of his concept of the Catholicity of the Christian Church. When this outline is supplemented by various of his other writings there emerges a broad picture of a Catholic Church.

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104. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 382.

105. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. J. Robertson, 12th January, 1864, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

## The Catholic Church and Its Diversity

Martineau's idea of a Catholic Church begins with the observation that there are real differences in people's perceptions of the Christian faith, and that these differences actually enrich the Faith. They were not superficial differences, or the results of unfortunate accidents, but they lay in the very nature of humanity and were intrinsic to the life of the Church, (106) which would be immeasurably impoverished without them:

It is not similarity but dissimilarity, that constitutes the qualification for heartfelt union among mankind: and the mental affinities resemble the electric, in which like poles repel, while the unlike attract ... The same principle distinguishes natural Society from artificial Association. The former, springing from the impulse of human feeling, brings together elements that are unlike: the latter, directed to specific ends, combines the like. The one, completing defect by redundancy, and compensating redundancy by defect, produces a real and living unity: the other, multiplying a mere fraction of life by itself, retires further and further from any integral good, and results only in exaggerated partiality. (107)

Martineau illustrated his essential thesis by pointing out that there were greater differences between the 'theocratic doctrine' of St. Mark's Gospel and the 'mystic depth' of St. John's Gospel, than between Augustine and Pelagius, or Jerome and Rufinus. Martineau held that the early period was able to span its differences because it was inspired, while the later period was unable to do this because it was withered up by contentions. (108)

This illustration assumes that the Gospel writers were in some sort of spiritual harmony with one another in spite of their differences; and Martineau's initial proposition of a Catholic Church containing a variety of different views has much to commend it. This phenomenon he maintained was demonstrated in miniature in certain denominations such as the Methodists and the Society of Friends, who held a variety of opinions, but

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106. James Martineau, Studies of Christianity (London, 1958), pp.401-2.

107. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.428.

108. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 76.

subordinated their theological differences to the needs of the Christian Church and Christian worship. (109)

Martineau's position was supported by his own experience. He acknowledged that he had received far more from those who were outside the Unitarian movement than from those within it:

I am conscious that my deepest obligations, as a learner from others, are in almost every department to writers not of my own creed. In Philosophy I have had to unlearn most that I had imbibed from my early text books, and the authors in chief favour with them. In Biblical interpretation, I derive from Calvin and Whitby the help that fails me in Crell and Belsham. In Devotional literature and religious thought, I find nothing of ours that does not pale before Augustine, Tauler, and Pascal. And in the Poetry of the Church it is the Latin or the German hymns, or the lines of Charles Wesley, or of Keble, that fasten on my memory and heart, and make all else seem poor and cold. (110)

His practice of drawing from a wide catholic background also influenced his habits of worship. His friend, Professor Knight, recalled how, after 1872, Martineau would worship at Little Portland Street Chapel on Sunday morning, but that this was not enough for him, so in the afternoons he went to Westminster Abbey where sometimes he heard Dean Stanley preach. (111)

Not only should individuals acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds to which they are indebted, but churches also should be aware of the varied roots from which their tradition has developed. He indicated in his correspondence with MacDonald the danger of tracing the history of their churches solely to Unitarian sources, as by implication this would exclude the possibility of being in communion with non-Unitarians as well. (112)

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109. The Church of the Future, p.17.

110. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 375.

111. William Knight, Retrospects (London, 1904), p.105

112. The Inquirer, August 27th. 1859, 763-64.

### Christ Brings Together Those Holding Diverse Views.

For Martineau, Christians holding diverse views were not simply formed into the Catholic Church by the process of unlike poles attracting one another: Christ was the centre of unity and it was faith in him which brought people of different outlooks together:

The Faith of Christ throws together unlike ingredients which civilization has sifted out from one another. Every true Church reproduces the unity which the world has dissolved.(113)

Because Christ is not divided but equal to the whole of our humanity, the partial truths which we have grasped need to be held in relation to the whole. Martineau believed that separate growths would exhaust themselves within a few generations. Believers, on the other hand, by keeping 'a reverent eye fixed on the person and spirit of Christ, ... cannot but find their partial apprehensions corrected and enlarged' and in his holy presence the divisions of Christianity would fall away. (114)

Martineau's belief that Christ would bring together those of differing outlooks is perhaps best summed up by a hymn of Charles Wesley's which Martineau included in both his later hymn books:

Ye different sects, who all declare  
Lo! here is Christ, or Christ is there!  
Your claim alas! ye cannot prove;  
Ye want the genuine mark of love.

To Wesley, as to Martineau, the division of sects was not a matter of doctrine: it was a failure of love. And both writers would see the person and example of Jesus Christ as able to draw all men unto himself:

Scattered, O Lord, thy servants lie,  
Till thou collect them with thine eye, -  
Draw by the music of thy name,  
And charm into a beauteous frame.

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113. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.432-33.

114. Studies of Christianity, pp.410-13.

Join every soul that looks to thee  
In bonds of perfect charity;  
Greatest of gifts, thy love impart,  
And make us of one mind and heart.

Charles Wesley, 1749 (115)

Wesley and Martineau are not entirely at one on this point. The suggestion in Charles Wesley's hymn is that through the love of Christ believers would come to a common mind and a common understanding of the Christian faith. He expressed this in another well known hymn: 'Even now we think and speak the same, And cordially agree; Concentred all, through Jesu's name, In perfect harmony.' (116) Martineau's view differed in that he believed that through the love of Christ unity could be found as individuals came to appreciate and understand differing apprehensions of the Christian faith which contrasted with their own beliefs. In this Martineau was closer to John Wesley's ecclesiology than that of his brother Charles.

#### The Catholic Church is Founded on a Non-doctrinal Basis

Martineau maintained that no Christian unity would ever be possible which was based upon schools of thought. (117) In harmony with this idea, he also held that a Catholic Church could not be formed by expelling minorities whose doctrine deviated from that of the majority. Martineau followed Richard Baxter in condemning this process as a continual robbing Christ of some portion of his flock. (118)

Martineau was not simply opposed to a doctrinal basis for a Catholic Church on the grounds that doctrines are only partial and transitory insights into truth, but also because he believed that communities were not

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115. James Martineau, Hymns for the Christian Church and Home, seventeenth edition (London, 1867), No. 241.

116. The Methodist Hymn Book (London, 1933), No. 745.

117. The Theological Review (1866), 296.

118. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 550.

essentially made by agreement on rules and regulations, but by shared memories and thoughts, desires, sympathies and love. (119) At the heart of Martineau's catholicity lay no dogmatic system, but spiritual affections towards God and towards man. This for him was the only possible principle for a true Catholic Church; a union of holiness and love, founded on and encouraged by Jesus Christ. (120) Doctrine was less important than emotion and feeling:

That I find myself in intellectual accordance with the Socini, or Blandrata, or Servetus in one cardinal doctrine, - and that a doctrine not distinctively Christian, but belonging also to Judaism, to Islam, and to simple Deism, - is as nothing compared with the intense response wrung from me by some of Luther's readings of St. Paul, and by his favourite book, the "Theologia Germanica". (121)

There was a pragmatic element also in Martineau's view of the Catholic Church. He held that to live out the faith was important, so that it became not a creed about God but an existence in God; if this was done the Christian would find himself alongside many unexpected friends. But beneath that pragmatic view lay the theological conviction (paralleled in F. D. Maurice's work):

Sink deep into the inmost life of any Christian faith and you will touch the ground of all. (122)

#### Working Towards a Catholic Church

Martineau maintained that 'a Catholic religion required a Catholic Church' but because such a church depended upon relationships and not upon

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119. Endeavours after the Christian Life, pp.246-47.

120. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 509, 519.

121. The Inquirer, August 27th. 1859, 764.

122. Studies of Christianity, p.412.

Maurice said, 'my business, because I am a theologian, and have no vocation except for theology, is not to build, but to dig, to show that economics and politics ... must have a ground beneath themselves, that society is not to be made anew by arrangements of ours, but is to be regenerated by finding the law and ground of its order and harmony, the only secret of its existence in God.' (Alec Vidler, The Theology of F. D. Maurice (London, 1948), p.12.

structures or doctrinal agreements, it could not be brought about by negotiation, but needed the right attitude of mind and of the affections. He believed that there was already a new spirit abroad which pervaded those of very different classes and was at work in people's moral and spiritual natures. (123) In the Preface to Hymns of Praise and Prayer he expressed his belief that its contents were a witness to the gracious and catholic spirit which prevailed in churches which were far apart, 'and which places the inspirations of each at disposal for the culture of all.' (124)

In the same spirit (even as early as 1830 as a Minister in Dublin) he had stipulated that it was the duty of every Christian to remember the points that he held in common with other followers of Christ. He felt that such an approach would show that amid all the diversities the living portion of faith experienced by one individual would also be seen to be shared by others. The same sentiment is found in an early sermon:

Let but the diversities which separate Christians retire,  
and the truths which they all profess to love advance to  
prominence, and, whatever may become of party names, our  
aims are fulfilled, and our satisfaction is complete. (126)

Martineau's aim was to make the Catholic Church as broad as Christianity (127) but this would require a largeness of heart in approaching other Christians. In one of his most moving sermons Martineau set out for his own congregation what they needed to do to make visible the unity of the Catholic Church. They should be ready to forgive; they were not to believe the mutual slanders between the denominations; they were not to be angry with those whose outlook was so narrow they could see nothing

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123. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 507.

124. James Martineau, Hymns of Praise and Prayer (London, 1874), p.xviii.

125. Studies of Christianity, pp.480, 483.

126. The Existing State of Theology as an Intellectual Pursuit, and Religion as a Moral Influence, p.22.

127. The Theological Review, 3 (1866), 299.



but their own truth; and then beneath the divisions created by the intellect they would begin to perceive a widespread union of hearts. (128)

In the middle years of the nineteenth century Martineau was optimistic that the following century would see the advent of the Catholic Church and that the separate denominations would flow together. (129)

#### The Questions of a Unitarian Denomination, and of Open Trusts

From Martineau's views on the Catholic Church there emerged two important questions which call for some discussion: the question of his opposition to a Unitarian denomination, and the question of the open trusts of the early dissenting Chapels.

Professor R. K. Webb in a recent lecture, 'Views of Unitarianism from Halley's Comet' argued that by 1835 'Martineau was launched on the polemical course (against a Unitarian denomination) that was to make him so many enemies and to wreck most of his efforts to recast his denomination'. (130) There is truth in this comment, but it is also vital to realise that Martineau's opposition to a Unitarian denomination was an intrinsic part of his theory of the Catholic Church, and a key element in his attempt to reform the Liberal Dissenting Churches. A Unitarian church stood for two principles which were in direct opposition to Martineau's doctrine of the Church: that of an orthodoxy, and that of a church organised on a doctrinal basis. Thus Professor Webb's inference that the 'polemical course' stood in the way of his attempt to reorganise the denomination is rather misleading, for Martineau's opposition to a Unitarian denomination was an essential part of his reconstruction. If this element of Martineau's approach had been removed or reformed, then his advocacy of a Catholic Church, which was a central pillar in his doctrine of the Church, would

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128. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.143.

129. Studies of Christianity, p.411.

130. R. K. Webb, 'View of Unitarianism from Halley's Comet,' Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, 18 (1986), 189.

have collapsed.

The debate on open trusts was centred on Martineau's belief that the early Liberal Dissenters formed their chapels on the basis of an open theology; without any restriction in the trust deeds regarding the doctrine which should be held then, or by future generations. As we have seen, Martineau praised the foresight of those founding fathers who refused to place doctrinal limits on their churches, and argued that the present occupants of the churches should adopt the same attitude. After his death, this view was challenged in particular by two people, Alexander Gordon and William Whitaker.

Although Alexander Gordon criticised the Open Trust Theory as early as 1900, he made a frontal attack on it when delivering the Essex Hall Lecture of 1913. (131) In that lecture Gordon referred to the rise and progress of the 'myth of the Open Trust' which he believed Martineau began propounding in 1860, following his letter to MacDonald on 'The Unitarian Position' of 1859. Gordon's main arguments were incorporated into William Whitaker's essay on 'The Open Trust Myth' (1917). Whitaker's argument may be summarised as follows. He maintained that the Trust deeds of the early chapels were formulated in the years following the Toleration Act of 1689. He argued that although the trust deeds were not restricted by any theology, there was nothing to show that this was because of any principle of liberty; indeed, as the Baptist chapels also had open trusts, it was most probable that this was not the case. He also pointed out that Edmund Calamy was often held up as a representative of the open trust principle, but as Calamy was only eighteen in 1689 he would have been too young to have had any influence, and moreover he was inclined towards 'reserve and secrecy as to his views, and both kept himself to himself, as he confessed, and advised others to do the same'. Whitaker also argued 'that the end of the seventeenth century was an unlikely time for liberality in framing trust deeds.' He held that the deeds were actually left open because the

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131. H. McLachlan, Alexander Gordon (Manchester, 1932), p.73.

doctrines were already safeguarded by the terms of the Toleration Act, and that it was not until the vote was taken in favour of non-subscription at the famous Salter's Hall meeting of 1719 that the open principle was really established. (132)

Gordon's and Whitaker's arguments do not rule out the possibility that some churches were founded on an open theology because of liberal dissenting idealism. Although Whitaker discounts 'liberality in framing trust deeds' at the end of the seventeenth century, Martineau had already marshalled a number of factors which clearly pointed to a liberal tradition in the founding of churches at the end of that century:

When, in 1691, Francis Tallents opened his new Meeting-house at Shrewsbury, "he caused it to be written on the walls, that it was built, not for a faction or party, but for the promotion of repentance and faith in communion with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."  
(133)

Martineau also pointed out that Calamy, whom Whitaker disregarded on the grounds of his being too young and too secretive, in 1694 insisted on being ordained a 'minister of the Catholic Church of Christ, without any confinement.' Although this does not conclusively prove Martineau's point, it does show that there was an open liberal tradition both in the founding of churches and in the ministry at the end of the seventeenth century; a fact which seriously weakens Whitaker's argument.

Whitaker appears to have wanted to show that in the thirty years between 1689 and 1719 there was practically no open theology in churches. However it seems reasonable to assume that if by 1719 a vote had been won for non-subscription, then there must have been a growth of opinion which enabled this to happen. Whitaker grudgingly acknowledged this, but wished to confine that growth of opinion to the years between 1712 and 1719; Martineau's evidence suggests that the growth of opinion had started much earlier.

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132. William Whitaker, 'The Open Trust Myth,' Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, 1 (1916-18), 303, 304, 305, 306, 308, 310.

133. The Theological Review, 3 (1866), 298.

In Martineau's favour it has to be said that the trust deeds did not specify any limitations regarding the theology that was to be taught and preached; there is also evidence that following the Toleration Act some churches were founded on the principle of an open theology; and that the non-subscribing principle was publicly accepted by 1719. On Whitaker's side it must be acknowledged that Calvinism was the predominant theological position adopted by Dissenters in the years immediately following the Toleration Act, and that this is far removed from the open, liberal theology for which Martineau was contending. From this it appears that Martineau's assertion that the Presbyterian forefathers had founded their churches on the basis of an open theology is not likely to be accurate for the churches founded immediately after 1689; however it would probably be true for the churches founded after 1712.

The issue of open trusts is of some importance to Martineau's Catholic view of the Church, in that he identified the early Presbyterians as a kind of working model of what the whole Church should be like. He saw the early Presbyterian congregations as a small corner of the Church Universal, which had retained for the whole Church a Catholicity and non-exclusiveness until better days should come.

#### Schemes of Christian Unity

Religious union is not to be brought about, like a railway pacification, by competitive triumphs, or negotiated compromise, but by the spontaneous relapse of divergent thoughts upon some point of all-absorbing piety. (134)

Martineau wrote these words at the height of the railway mania in 1859, some eight years after he had outlined his first scheme of Church union. He came to believe that it was not sufficient to have individual catholic-minded people scattered across the denominations, (135) but felt that some structure was needed to turn the inherent catholicity of the

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134. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 405.

135. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 508.

Church into a visible reality. Over a period of some forty years he produced three separate schemes of Christian union. None of the schemes was successful: two never got beyond the theoretical stage, and the third created no more than a tiny ripple on the surface of the Victorian Church. But they do reveal his essential thought on Christian unity, and show a continuity and a movement in his thinking on this subject.

Martineau's first attempt at unity was propounded in 1851 in an essay entitled, 'The Battle of the Churches'. The establishment of a Roman Catholic hierarchy in England and the resultant controversy caused Martineau to conclude that the time had come to form a new National Church. He felt that the Church of England had failed to embrace the Christianity of the nation, or represent its religious interests.

No Church born of the Reformation has driven out half the number of Dissenters: and as to Romanists, she will have created more in this generation than the Jesuit missionaries could steal in a century from any other communion. Never was incompetence proved on a scale so gigantic; ... (136)

Martineau maintained that there were two ways in which a national church could be achieved: either the largest of the denominations could be taken as representing the faith of the nation, or all the denominations could be viewed as contributing to the national church, with each sect representing a partial declaration of the nation's faith. (137) Martineau believed that there were strong arguments against the first of these, for the most powerful religious community in the country might only constitute a small minority of the inhabitants, resulting in discontent among the others. He favoured the second approach which he saw as closer to reality in a diverse society; this alone, he believed, would bring tranquillity back into the Church and restore it to an influential position in the world.

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136. James Martineau, Miscellanies (Boston, 1852), p.446.

137. Miscellanies, p.463.

Martineau visualised the National Church being established on the basis of minimal doctrinal agreement. Every doctrinal clause should be omitted which could not be accepted by, for example, the Wesleyans, the Baptists, the Independents and the Arians; those who felt that the resulting creed was inadequate would be at perfect liberty to supplement it. The scheme involved the surrender by the Church of England of all its buildings and endowments to ecclesiastical trustees, who would also receive the assets of all the other denominations who wished to be part of the National Church. Martineau did acknowledge the right of Non-conformists to continue on a purely voluntary basis. (138)

The scheme was not aimed at imposing uniformity on a new national church, but in accordance with his catholic principles Martineau envisaged the widest possible latitude for churchmanship and worship; thus episcopally ordained clergymen would be working alongside non-episcopally ordained ministers. Parishes would be at liberty to choose their own churchmanship and their own ministers by democratic consent: thus it would be conceivable to have Wesleyan and Presbyterian parishes. (139)

A note of sad realism crept into Martineau's scheme with the acknowledgement that it might not be possible to implement such a plan for sociological rather than for theological reasons: the free development of separate denominations had progressed rapidly and created a number of powerful organisations concerned with schools, colleges and special training for the Christian ministry. (140) These organisations, operating in different social channels, had developed their own momentum, with the result that any scheme of union could by 1851 have missed the opportune moment.

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138. Miscellanies, pp.463-70.

139. Miscellanies, p.469.

140. Miscellanies, p.466.

In 'The Battle of the Churches' Martineau attempted to achieve for the Christian Church that which Thomas Arnold and Renn Dickson Hampden had failed to achieve almost twenty years earlier. In 1833 Arnold had published the Principles of Church Reform which aroused opposition and personal antagonism towards him. Arnold's basic theory was:

that a Church Establishment is essential to the well being of the nation; that the existence of Dissent impairs the usefulness of an Establishment always, and now, from peculiar circumstances, threatens its destruction; and that to extinguish Dissent by persecution being both wicked and impossible, there remains the true, but hitherto untried way, to extinguish it by comprehension ... (141)

Unlike Arnold, Martineau was not principally concerned with the widening of the 'Established Church', nor was he simply concerned with the eradication of Dissent, but he did share Arnold's vision of a comprehensive, national church. This church he believed should reflect the religious ethos of the nation, and would be greatly enriched by embracing a wide variety of religious expression. While Arnold advocated using only the parish churches, Martineau envisaged chapels also being handed over to the trustees of the national church and used in its worship and mission. It was one of the strengths of Arnold's scheme that he depicted a variety of services being conducted by different ministers in the same parish church, and it was one of the weaknesses of Martineau's system that he advocated the establishment of parishes with a particular churchmanship which would be determined locally by democratic vote.

Martineau's scheme also bears some resemblance to Hampden's Observations on Religious Dissent (1834). In the Preface to his work Hampden wrote:

The real causes of separation are to be found in that confusion of theological and moral truth with religion, which is evidenced in the profession of different sects. Opinions on religious matters are regarded as identical with the objects of faith; ... While we agree in the canon

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141. Thomas Arnold, Principles of Church Reform (London, 1883), pp.v-vi.

of Scripture - in the very words for the most part, if not without exception, from which we learn what are the objects of faith - we suffer disunion to spread among us, through the various interpretations suggested by our own views and reasonings on the admitted facts of Scripture. We introduce theories of the Divine being and attributes - theories of human nature and of the universe - principles drawn from the various branches of human philosophy - into the body itself of revealed wisdom. (142)

Martineau shared Hampden's thesis that religious opinions had become confused with the truth of Christianity. But whereas Hampden looked to scripture as the standard for agreement, Martineau recognised too many problems and contradictions in that approach, and himself sought to get back to the character and religion of Jesus as a basis for agreement, and in so doing anticipated an element of Harnack's work.

One disadvantage of Martineau's plan of union was that it treated the Church of England and the Nonconformists unequally. If the dissenting congregations were permitted to withdraw from the scheme, why should the same concession, in a free society, not be given to the Church of England? Was this because without the Church of England the scheme would not work, or was it that Martineau, like his friend Wicksteed, viewed the Church of England as belonging to the nation, so that every Englishman was a trustee of it? Another awkward feature of the scheme was the idea that parishes should choose their own churchmanship and their own ministers by a democratic process. Would this not lead to many people in each locality feeling angered by their exclusion, as for example when Baptists were living in a Wesleyan parish? In such cases the very thing Martineau was trying to overcome at a national level might well be superimposed at a local level. It is not surprising that in his subsequent schemes Martineau abandoned this plan.

Martineau's second attempt at a scheme of Christian union came in 1867 when a meeting was held in the Library of Manchester New College to discuss

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142. Renn Dickson Hampden, Observations on Religious Dissent (Oxford, 1834), p.7.



forming a union among Liberal Christian Churches and persons 'for the promotion and application of Religious in Life, apart from doctrinal limitations in Thought'. (143) The name Free Christian Union was chosen, but only after much discussion as to whether the word 'Christian' should be included or not. J. J. Tayler intimated that he would probably not have joined the Union if the title Christian had been omitted, for such a society would be 'so aimless and so incapable of any practical religious issue.' (144) Martineau also strongly defended the inclusion of the word 'Christian'. (145) In contrast to the attitudes of Tayler and Martineau, there is an implied criticism in the comment of Estlin Carpenter, that such a move deprived the Union of some of its most able supporters such as Francis Newman.

At the heart of Martineau's scheme was the recognition that theological groupings were breaking up and that many people were discovering religious truths in very different traditions from their own:

Is there a man at once intellectual and devout, in any land where the English language is spoken, who does not own spiritual obligations to both the Newmans? or who has not on his choicest shelf both the Christian Year and the In Memoriam? Is not Mr. Maurice revered as a deliverer by numbers of people, both more and less orthodox than himself? In what cultivated home of English religion has Frederick Robertson not preached his word of power? How little has the repute of "unsoundness" thinned the mixed multitude which throngs to hear every word of a Stanley or a Jowett? (146)

This union was not to be formed by assent to a minimum doctrinal standard, but was to rest upon a much more pragmatic basis, in refusing to insist on anything other than that which was necessary to fulfil the simple

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143. J. Estlin Carpenter, James Martineau, p.456.

144. Letters of John James Tayler, edited by J. H. Thom, 2 vols. (London, 1872), II, 311.

145. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 520.

146. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 502.

conditions of common worship and work. (147) In the words of J. J. Tayler it sought 'religious sympathies rather than theological agreement'. (148) The Union called on all those who loved God and their fellow men to common action and a search for divine truth. (149) Both Martineau and Tayler worked hard to promote the new body. Tayler wrote an impressive work, entitled A Catholic Christian Church, the Want of Our Time, in which he set out his belief that the greatest hindrance to a Catholic Church was the assumption by the different sects 'that Christianity is identical with their own conception of it'. (150) Martineau too did his best to promote the enterprise in a paper, New Affinities of Faith : A Plea for a Free Christian Union (1869), in which he carefully set out the aims of the Union and met point by point some of the criticism with which it had been assailed. (151) 'A fine paper for the Free Christian Union' was Henry Sidgwick's comment on Martineau's work, in a letter written to his mother on 8th February, 1869. (152)

Martineau, Tayler, and Sidgwick the Cambridge philosopher, were the key people behind the Union. The Rev. C. Kegan Paul, the Vicar of Sturminster Marshall, Dorset, also became a prominent member, and Tayler persuaded M. Athanase Coquerel of the French Protestant Church to be actively involved. (153) At the end of the first year the movement appeared to be gaining momentum, and the room taken for the anniversary service was far too small for the large gathering, so the meeting had to be

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147. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 503-504.

148. Letters of John James Tayler, II, 324.

149. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 509.

150. John James Tayler, A Catholic Christian Church the want of our Time (London, 1869), p.1.

151. The aims of the Free Christian Union are set out in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 509.

152. Arthur Sidgwick and Eleanor Sidgwick, Henry Sidgwick: A Memorial (London, 1906) p.189.

153. Letters of John James Tayler, II, 324.

adjourned while the assembly reformed in larger premises. Within two years, however, the movement had been wound up. The reasons for its failure were several. In the first place the Union failed to capture the minds and hearts of the Church of England clergy and the tutors of the ancient Universities. A letter from Sidgwick to Martineau highlighted this problem:

I write to give you an account of my visit to Oxford, as far as it bears upon the Free Christian Union. The prospect is not very encouraging. It appears that the Liberals at Oxford are chiefly 1) positivists of some shade; 2) Broad Churchmen of the mildly comprehensive and cautiously vague type, with innovating tendencies, chiefly political; or 3) Metaphysicians, either non-religious or with a religion far too unearthly for them to care about operating directly on the public creeds. Such was my view before I saw Green, and he quite confirms it ....

I talked to Jowett. He is by no means unsympathetic, and was anxious not to discourage the undertaking. But he seems to think 1) that Anglican clergymen ought to take the Church of England for their sphere of liberalising work; 2) that the union between enlightened Christians of all denominations though very real, was too ethereal to be expressed in the concrete form of an association. (154)

There were other factors also which caused the failure of the Union.

Tayler died in 1869 soon after his return from Transylvania, and with his death was removed the one person who had the ability to hold the enterprise together and to bring it out of obscurity into public view. It must also be noted that one of the major aims of the Union was that of 'common action' but projects for common action did not readily suggest themselves.

In this, as in his previous scheme of union, Martineau showed that he had no aptitude for church politics. In the years before the Free Christian Union was launched Martineau sent a suggested outline of his plan to his old friend Charles Wicksteed, who in his reply reminded Martineau that it was unrealistic to expect to offer acceptable terms to the Church

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154. Arthur Sidgwick and Eleanor Sidgwick, Henry Sidgwick: A Memorial, p.192.

Sidgwick is here referring to Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Balliol College, (1870-93) and contributor to Essays and Reviews; and to T. H. Green, the Oxford philosopher.

of England from a 'body like ours so feared and suspected' without any prior consultation. (155)

However, Martineau was always ready to learn from his mistakes. His first scheme for Christian unity was published in a religious journal in the hope of attracting support. This failed, and so he evolved a more active scheme of setting up a group of people, in the hope that this would achieve some kind of unity across the denominations. This also failed, and so he directed his third scheme at Parliamentary legislation, although in fact it made little progress in that direction. In a letter to L. P. Jacks, Martineau describes his efforts in this project:

I have been a good deal taken off from my proper work of late by engagement (in Sir George Cox's absence in Cannes) with the Church Reform movement. I have had to draft a Bill for Disestablishment without Disendowment and for the Federal Union of religious denominations under the name of the "Church of England". (156)

He outlined his scheme, 'The National Church as a Federal Union' when addressing the Bedford Chapel Debating Society on 8th December 1886. The essence of the address was later published in the Contemporary Review of March, 1887. (157)

This scheme of unity was in sharp contrast to his 1851 plan. He made no attempt to reduce the formulas to what was common to all. The benefices of the Church of England were not to be open to Non-Episcopalians. There was no suggestion of disendowing the Church of England, nor was there any provision for Wesleyan or Presbyterian parishes. On the contrary, at the heart of the scheme was the desire to place all churches on equal terms of

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155. Memorials of the Rev. Charles Wicksteed, edited by Philip Henry Wicksteed (London, 1886), p.154.

156. MS. letter from James Martineau to L. P. Jacks, February 24th. 1887, Manchester College Library, Oxford.  
For a full account of Martineau's association with the Rev. Sir George Cox (biographer of Bishop John Colenso) and for their membership of the National Church Reform Union, along with their attempts to introduce a Bill into the House of Lords see James Drummond and C. B. Upton, James Martineau (London, 1901), II, 108-128.

157. Also in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 539-576.

recognition, in the hope that by so doing natural trust and sympathy would grow up between them.

The scheme involved disestablishment without disendowment. The state would relinquish control of the Church in favour of its self-government, and the Episcopal Church would be set free to take its place side by side with all the other denominations who had one hundred years of history and two hundred congregations. They would be linked together in a federal union, forming the United English Christian Church, with each group of churches having representation on the national body. Martineau visualised the constituent churches being bound together in loyalty to each other, under a common Head, with a great deal of work in common, but without a breach of interior allegiance to their own communions. (158) He came to believe that the best practical approach to unity was to remove the obstacles in the hope of providing a climate where mutual understanding could grow.

Martineau knew that he was unpopular in ecumenical circles:

It was well for me that, from my residence here, I was unable to attend the London meeting of Nonconformist Ministers with the Bishops, who were experimenting on the possibility of union. If I had not met the fate of Stephen, it would have been only because words are not stones. (159)

His unpopularity stemmed from the fact that his approach to ecumenical relations was totally at variance with other initiatives. Those involved with inter-church relations would be seeking unity through uniformity in doctrine, which Martineau had long since abandoned in favour of latitude for variety which he felt was essential for any religious unity. At the centre of his own scheme was what he called 'unity of faith' rather than

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158. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 560-69.

Martineau's own brief summary of the scheme is found in his letter to J. Estlin Carpenter, February 8th. 1887, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

159. William Knight, Retrospects, p.136.

'unity of opinion'. (160)

Martineau was right in his observation that the feeling of fellowship crossed the denominational boundaries. This was something which he and Tayler had experienced in their wide association with members of other denominations, at home and abroad. He also saw the nature of the opposition quite clearly:

the "FREE CHRISTIAN UNION" (is) intended to serve as a rallying-point for reformers who deem the doctrinal requirements of existing sects excessive and superfluous, and who would be content with any church inspired, according to the Christian rule, with Love to God and Love to Man. It is not surprising that an organised movement with such an aim should be exposed to criticism from the most opposite sides. Assuming as it does that the present ecclesiastical distribution of men is false to the real religious facts, and is radically wrong in its very basis, it encounters, as a matter of course, the hostility of all the denominational journals, whose function it is to speak for a doctrine and a sect. (161)

In an age when denominationalism was so strong, Martineau was here putting forward a scheme which was far in advance of its time: it anticipated the present-day situation in which church attendance often has little to do with specific religious or doctrinal beliefs.

What was surprising about Martineau's schemes of union, was not the schemes themselves but his lack of realism in believing that they might actually be accepted in Victorian England. An ecclesiastical politician, like the Methodist Jabez Bunting, would have known instantly that all these schemes would fail, and yet their very existence suggests that Martineau naively never suspected this. If there was a flaw in his character then it could well be located in his type of academic isolation, in which he read widely, argued soundly and conversed with many of the leading people of the day, and yet somehow divorced the academic idea from the practical reality. Did the idealism behind his schemes blind him to the fact that it was the wrong time, the wrong presentation, and perhaps even the wrong scheme?

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160. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 545, 552.

161. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 508.

Since the same fate happened in 1888 to his proposals for church reorganisation within Unitarianism, it is clear that he was not an ecclesiastical politician.

Martineau's political incompetence can perhaps be accounted for by the intensity of his Catholic spirit. His desire for Christian unity manifested itself in his constant protest against the deep divisions of Christendom, 'however hopeless' the cause might be. When Martineau collected together seventy-six of his major papers and published them in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, he prefaced the second volume with a summary of his vision of Church unity, and expressed his hope that some day the theological forces that kept the churches apart might be overcome by the powers of love and reverence:

The centrifugal dread of theological error overpowers at present the centripetal forces of reverence and love. But it may not always be so. And I cannot withdraw a protest, however hopeless it may seem, against allowing the Christian Church to remain a mere cluster of rival orthodoxies disowning and repelling each other, while, in the inmost heart of all, secret affections live and pray, with eye upturned to the same Infinite Perfection, and tears let fall for the same universal sorrows. (162)

It was a vision shared by other eminent Victorians such as Thomas Arnold and R. D. Hampden. But those who strove for Christian unity in the nineteenth century were moving against the currents of the time. In the opening decades of the twentieth century there were more hopeful signs. Sir Oliver Lodge was one amongst many who advocated the union of Christian denominations. Although he was doubtful that Martineau's actual proposals would ever be accepted, Lodge was moved by Martineau's sentiment, shared his vision, and adopted Martineau's attitude to church unity as his own. (163)

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162. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, v-vi.

163. Oliver Lodge, Man and the Universe (London, 1908), pp.107-108.

## THE SACRAMENTS: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Martineau and J. J. Tayler both continued the high church tradition of the English Presbyterians. In Martineau's case this can be clearly seen in the liturgies he devised and the beauty and order of his services of worship. However, unlike Tayler, who regarded the two great ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as essential constituents of the Christian Church, (164) Martineau came to believe that only the Lord's Supper retained its significance. In preaching to his congregation at Little Portland Street Chapel in 1863 he expressed this view which he had previously shared with his Paradise Street congregation almost a quarter of a century earlier: 'while the significance of baptism has quite ceased, the essential idea of the Lord's Supper remains undisturbed and in full force'. (165)

### Baptism

Whether Martineau ever practised infant baptism, it is difficult to say. From his own writings we know that it was a service commonly used among Unitarians. (166) F. D. Maurice, for example, was baptised by his father, a Unitarian Minister, using a Trinitarian formula. (167) Both Martineau's later hymn books have a section for Baptism or Dedication. There is no record of Martineau baptising any of his own children, and in 1835 he used 'a simple service of Dedication' on the occasion when the aged Blanco White christened Martineau's son, Herbert. Four years later in the Liverpool Controversy he set out his critique of the Anglican practice of baptism, which clearly reveals his own thoughts on the subject.

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164. Letters of John James Tayler, II, 287.

165. James Martineau, 'St. Paul's Doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments', unpublished sermon preached at Paradise Street, Liverpool on April 4th. 1841, and Little Portland Street Chapel, London on June 21st 1863; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

166. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.33.

167. Alec R. Vidler, The Theology of F. D. Maurice (London, 1948), p.97.



Behind Martineau's criticism of infant baptism was the belief that the language used in relation to the child, such as 'sin', 'God's wrath' and the 'Holy Ghost' was trifling with and reducing the great language and events of religion. (168) He opposed the practice of baptism on rational, moral and historical grounds.

His rational objections started with his denial that the sacraments contained anything exclusive and unnatural which changed the relationship between God and man. He challenged the belief, represented in the Book of Common Prayer, that baptism was more than a sign or symbol, in the sense that the act itself actually brought about the descent of the Holy Spirit and was indispensable to the removal of sin. The orthodox view of baptism posed an additional rational problem for Martineau concerning the difference in holiness between children who had been baptised and those who had not, and how that difference could be evaluated. (169)

On moral grounds Martineau held it to be inconceivable that children with no sense of duty could be pronounced to have received 'remission of their sins'. He argued that the shorter and private form of the service in the Book of Common Prayer, to be used in cases of extreme danger, made it clear that baptism was an indispensable channel of grace and a positive necessity to salvation. He maintained that according to the Anglican rite, the prayers, faith and love of the parents and friends counted for nothing if there was no priest and no water. (170) If Martineau's criticism on this point appears to be too forceful then it needs to be remembered that behind it lay the fact that Martineau's first child had died in infancy. To a man of Martineau's tender affections and deep intuitive sympathies, it would have been outrageous that an unbaptised infant would have been deemed to have been damned.

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168. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.18.

169. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, pp.6, 17, 18.

170. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, pp. 18, 19, 20.

Historically Martineau argued that baptism was a pre-Christian rite used by the Jews for the admission of proselytes to their religion. It was thus an existing practice adopted by Christianity rather than instituted by Jesus. The biblical witness in which there is no mention of children being baptised tended to support the view that the Jewish practice of only baptising proselytes was adopted by the early Christians. He also held that there was no evidence that the Apostles used the Trinitarian formula and therefore by the standards of the modern Church their baptisms were invalid. (171)

Towards the end of his critique Martineau stated his own view:

For myself, I believe, with our opponents, that the doctrine of original sin and the practice of infant baptism do belong to each other, and must stand or fall together: and therefore deem it a fact very significant of the apostles' theology, that no infant can be shown ever to have been "brought to the font" by these first true missionaries of Christianity. (172)

As he rejected original sin, so he also rejected baptism which he held historically to have been a 'sign of conversion, not a means of salvation'.

It was Pusey's tract on Baptism (tract 67) which first led F. D. Maurice to realise the divergences in theology between himself and the Tractarians. Maurice held the view that people did not acquire by baptism the privilege of living in the presence of the Trinity, but they were baptised because they already had that privilege. Martineau, although of course not using the term the Trinity, had a similar view to that of Maurice but drew the opposite conclusion; that because people already had the privilege of living in the presence and the love of God there was no need to baptise them. Baptism he maintained would add nothing to their lives which they did not already enjoy, and could not remove any obstacle which prevented them from living a life with God.

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171. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, pp. 19, 32, 33.

172. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, pp.33-34.

Martineau's criticism of the practice of infant baptism is cogently expressed. It is perhaps open to criticism in that he often falls into the danger of looking back to an ideal time; whether it is the English Presbyterians in the case of the Church, or the apostles in the case of baptism. In addition, Martineau seemed to disregard the fact that there had been some sixteen hundred years of history and practice of infant baptism within the Church. Fundamentally, however, his position depends on human feeling in preference to doctrinal practice, and it commands some respect. In place of the Baptismal Service, Martineau wrote his own service of dedication based on the Gospel account of the children being brought to Jesus (St. Mark 10 :16). In his service the child was dedicated to God with the following words:

I dedicate thee ..... to serve with thy whole mind the pure will of God; and offer thee, at the threshold of a Christian discipline, to be led by the hand of Jesus Christ into the Kingdom of Heaven. (173)

In the service the parents made three promises; to encourage in the child a pure mind (of which Christ said 'of such are the Kingdom of Heaven'), to make a home worthy of one who is offered to Christ, and to train the child in the faith of the religion of Christ. Although far removed from baptism, the whole service was in harmony with Martineau's Christ-centred religion and Christ-centred doctrine of the Church.

### Holy Communion

An indication of the seriousness with which Martineau approached Holy Communion can be seen from his account of a class of young people he prepared to receive their first Communion, which involved 'weekly lectures extending through nine months', on the history of the Eucharist. (174) Yet

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173. James Martineau 'Christening Address' used between 1850-1871; unpublished, Manchester College Library, Oxford.

174. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, iv.

he disowned the sacramental theory of communion and subjected the Anglican practice of it to searching criticism.

At the centre of Martineau's objection to the rite of Holy Communion, as practised by the Church of England, was his belief that no ceremony or service made a change in God's nature, or indeed altered the nature of man. In addressing his young communicants he said:

God's Spirit has always lived with you, making your hearts burn with many a noble aspiration, and secretly showing you many a beauty, and remonstrating with you in many a remorse; and he will go on to live with you no otherwise .... Our worship, our commemoration, does not make that Real Presence which never has failed and never will fail us... (175)

It appeared to him that the ceremony of Holy Communion in the Church of England was not devised to operate on the mind of the participants but upon the nature of God.

Martineau's criticism was aimed at removing from Christianity what he considered to be the magical elements, to make way for the true worship of God. One such magical inference was the belief that a supernatural change actually takes place in the elements in a Communion Service. In support of this charge he quoted the catechism of the Church of England which affirmed that the body and blood of Christ were received at the Lord's table, not just figuratively in the mind of the communicant, but actually given. Further evidence supporting this case was the differentiation at the end of the service between the consecrated elements which were reverently consumed by the priest and the unconsecrated elements which were given to the curate. Martineau also could not accept the idea of a physical sanctity residing in solid and liquid substances.

He rejected the idea that the Lord's Supper was a mystery or a sacrament, and arguing from the Gospels he held that those who had emphasised the ritualistic character of the Eucharist by seeing it as the successor in the Gospels to the Passover commanded by the Law, had

exaggerated the evidence. He maintained that in the account of the synoptic Gospels the cup and the bread were separate from the commemorative meal, and moreover there was no evidence from the early history of the Church that Holy Communion was ever thought to have any relation to the Passover. St. John's Gospel maintains that the paschal meal was not even on the same day as the meeting in the upper room, but on the following one. (176)

All this led Martineau to conclude that Holy Communion was not a sacrament or a ritual, but simply a service of commemoration. Martineau believed that in his death Jesus ceased to be limited to one place, and one time, and one people, but that through the cross he opened to all nations a way of life and brought all people into a relationship of love with him and with God.

Hence the memorial of his death celebrates the universality and spirituality of the gospel; declares the brotherhood of men, the fatherhood of providence, the personal affinity of every soul with God. That is no empty rite, which overflows with these conceptions. (177)

Martineau wrote these words in 1839 and his later writings show no marked divergence from this position. The fraternal aspect of Holy Communion was something to which he constantly returned. The elements themselves he saw as symbols of 'brotherhood' which bound those who partook of the Communion with others down through the centuries and across the family of nations. (178)

Touching these emblems, we stretch our arms at once over eighteen centuries, and clasp an altar crowded already with millions of shadowy hands. We silently range ourselves with the eucharistic multitude that surrounds the slopes of

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176. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, pp. 20, 21, 22, 35.

177. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.38.

178. See: National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.330  
'St. Paul's Doctrine of the Church and the Sacrament',  
Studies of Christianity, p.413.

Calvary, and try to mingle our voices in the sweet and  
never-dying hymn they send across the plain of history.  
(179)

The Christian Reformer of 1853 reported a speech of Martineau's in which he referred to Holy Communion as being a 'distinctive rite by which those who wish to adopt the principles of the Christian religion as their own are distinguished.' (180) A similar sentiment was expressed in his address to new communicants in which he said that they had enrolled themselves in something wider and more enduring than the family group and had passed from a home dependence to the protection of the City of God. (181) A feature of Holy Communion found in Martineau's more mature thought is the idea of the disciple identifying with the suffering, humility, and self-sacrifice of Jesus:

But the chief feature of Communion is, that it identifies the disciples with their Master in his moment of utter humiliation and surrender, and so bears witness to the great truth, that the very essence and crown of our religion is self-sacrifice. (182)

Christ was central to Martineau's view of Holy Communion, as he was also central to his concept of the Church. He concluded one of his beautiful sermons with the idea that although the communion tables of the Christian denominations may have been separated, at length all the communicants will see that they have been fed 'by the same bread of life'. (183) If Christ were not present then the fraternal relationships embodied in the Communion rite would not exist. When speaking of the Communion Service he said:

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179. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.331.

180. The Christian Reformer 9 (1853), 517-18.

181. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 365.

182. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, 367.

183. Studies of Christianity, p.413.

But its central conception, of a paternal union under view of the sublime and universal relations which all responsible beings sustain to God and to each other, a union never known till Christ present it, has suffered and can suffer no abatement. (184)

Martineau found great religious significance in the service of Holy Communion. He wrote special prayers for it and his major hymn books contained sections for Communion. Yet his interpretation of Holy Communion, although logically presented and defended, was widely out of step with the majority of Christians. Nevertheless, Martineau felt that he had retained the 'inherent beauty and significance' of Holy Communion, (185) and his efforts were consistently directed to removing the 'magical' elements in order to restore what he saw as the essential idea of the Lord's Supper. It is arguable that, with his strong mystical sense of the presence of the living Christ in all times and in all ages, Martineau succeeded in removing the 'magic' while retaining the mystery.

#### THE MINISTRY

In Victorian society, as Martineau observed, the minister was a figure of universal interest attracting sympathy or antipathy from a wide section of the population. (186) The parson was a constant target for caricature by nineteenth-century novelists, and in the eyes of the general public he had a very distinctive image:

the Catholic priest, with his alien sympathies, his mediaeval training, his skill in the archaeology of Art, his solitary life, his meek absolutism; - the Episcopalian clergyman, insular and national, steeped to the lips in the academic tincture of Oxford or Cambridge, presumed to be a gentleman without the trouble of proving it, and sure to be the scholar rather than the divine; - the Nonconformist minister, bourgeois in his manners, American in his politics, cosmopolitan in his philanthropy, too little of a Heathen to be a great scholar, and too polemic a Christian to be ill-equipped as a special theologian, - with a weakness for eloquence, a dependence on popularity, and a contempt for quiet forms of strength. (187)

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184. 'St. Paul's Doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments'.

185. Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, II, iv.

186. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 333.

187. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 334.

Martineau saw the whole concept of the ministry as surrounded by superstition and by tensions, and yet as of immense importance for the Christian Church when it was functioning properly.

### Criticisms of the Ministry

Martineau was dissatisfied with what he saw as the prevailing view of the ministry in the Church of England: in particular with its rigid trust in the idea of the Apostolic Succession, its desire to suppress the questioning mind, its lack of a sense of Divine calling, and its poor preaching. It was not only the Apostolic Succession as such which Martineau so disliked, but also the exclusiveness which accompanied it, whereby the clergy of the Church of England claimed that they alone had the divine authority to excommunicate, to administer the sacraments and to pronounce the forgiveness of sins. (188) By expressing these thoughts in 1839, Martineau was most probably reacting against the new emphasis on the authority of the ministry being propounded by the Oxford Movement and powerfully expressed by John Henry Newman in the first of the Tracts for the Times. Martineau maintained that often the clergy attained their sacred office, not through a sense of being called by God, but apparently through the good offices of an uncle, or that of a shrewd father buying a living. This system of patronage resulted in the Church of England containing more indifferent preachers than any other denomination in Christendom. He further criticised the Church of England for discouraging its would-be clergy from thinking for themselves; any minister who questioned the traditional beliefs was advised to undertake hard work in a parish 'to repair the flaws in his creed'. (189)

Martineau was also critical of the Nonconformist practice. He especially disliked the congregational system of government which he felt

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188. Christianity without Priest and without Ritual, p.23.

189. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 349, 350, 359.



deprived the small country church of a trained minister, and often forced it to rely for leadership and pastoral oversight on an untrained person with little education. (190) He acknowledged that the Unitarian Home Missions Board had set out to remedy this deficiency by attempting to train, at their College in Manchester, men from poorer backgrounds who would be content with a small stipend and the modest sphere of duty provided by village chapels, but it had failed in its aim, because once these men had become ministers they soon acquired the same aspirations as their colleagues. (191) A further weakness of the congregational system was the difficulties it caused for ministerial selection, which Martineau felt needed to be done on a Presbyterian basis:

The more difficult task of sifting the men who come to us as professed converts, or otherwise from outside, it is not possible to accomplish except by recourse to a responsible body, of ministers and laymen mixed, capable of testing applicants, precisely as the examining bodies test candidates for exercise of medical and legal professions ... (192)

He also noted that within the Nonconformist Churches there existed an uneasy relationship between ministers and the laity, and that the professional standing of the ministers was beginning to be eroded. (193) This was a point emphasised in the correspondence between Martineau and Edward Higginson, an old college friend, and also in a letter Martineau wrote to William Knight of St. Andrews. In writing to Higginson, expressing his opposition to the suggested removal of Manchester New College from London to Oxford, Martineau voiced his belief that the real problem of attracting students to the College lay not in its location or in its courses, but in the fact that the ministry itself was failing to appeal

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190. Suggestions on Church Organisation, pp.5-6.

191. James Martineau, 'Unitarian Church Polity - Letter to the Rev. Lawrence Scott,' The Christian Life, 13 (1887), 313.

192. MS. Letter from James Martineau to Mr. H. Rawson, April 6th. 1888; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

193. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 337.

to men of ability who could follow other professions:

The fact is, the evils from which we suffer have nothing to do with either the locality or the work of our College; and would not be touched by changes in either. They are due to the conditions of the ministry as a profession, and to the precariousness of religious belief in our time; and these things remaining the same, fewer and fewer will be content with the ministry, who have the capacity and the culture for anything else. (194)

In a letter to William Knight, Martineau expressed the same concern that the Church was failing to attract men of the right calibre into the ministry; he saw the pulpit ministry in decline and believed that the future of intellectual and thoughtful Christianity lay in the academic world. (195)

These criticisms of the Church of England and of Nonconformity did not lead Martineau to conclude that the ministry was unnecessary; on the contrary he held that there was a human tendency towards specialisation which demanded an order of religious guides to provide leadership within the Church and within society. (196)

#### The Calling and Training of the Ministry

Every minister, Martineau maintained, must be called by God. He cited the practice of the Puritan Church where the gifts and graces of each candidate for the ministry were keenly scrutinised, and where it was 'deemed a downright sacrilege to choose one whom God had not chosen'. (197) The Church had a responsibility to test this call. Once a candidate was accepted, the Church then had a duty to pay him an equal and adequate

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194. MS. letter from James Martineau to Edward Higginson, September 11th. 1879; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

195. MS. transcript of a letter from James Martineau to William Knight, August 4th. 1876; Manchester College Library, Oxford.

196. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 349.

197. Essays, Reviews and Addresses, II, 349.

stipend, regardless of whether he served in a country chapel or a large town church:

Even in the secular professions, the equality of the same skill, invoked by the same needs, wherever felt, is freely recognised; and one stipend covers the Army-Surgeon's duty, whether he tends the wounds of the rank and file, or of the Staff Officers at Headquarters. On these grounds, it is incumbent on a Church like ours to look on all its ministers as occupying the same platform, and spending themselves in the same work; and so to assign them equal share in any collective revenue raised for their support. (198)

In 1888, after half a century of involvement with ministerial training, Martineau set out his belief in the need for a well-trained graduate ministry. The proposals were widely rejected, on the grounds that such a scheme would deprive congregations of good men, who could undertake an adequate ministry even though they were unable to attain graduate status. (199) However Martineau had a clear rationale in propounding his view of the ministry. Behind his scheme lay the recognition that a church which had no systematic test of faith needed a trained ministry to protect congregations from misleading and insecure impressions:

The absence among us of any systematic test of faith renders all the more essential the less obtrusive proofs of intellectual and spiritual fitness for the Christian ministry. We suffer, indeed, I sometimes think, from a certain conceit of freedom, and are apt to be prepossessed in favour of any man who has thrown off his orthodoxy, and to receive him with open arms; so that our community comes to be regarded simply as an asylum for such as divest themselves of their old faith, whether or not they have replaced it by any other. (200)

He visualised ministerial training as a three-stage process. Initially the student would read for a degree at a University in the United Kingdom. This would be followed by his divinity training in a faculty of theology

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198. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.11.

199. R.K.Webb, 'View of Unitarianism from Halley's Comet,' Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, 18 (1986), 187.

200. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.17.

and philosophy. On the completion of his course he would be tested by a District Board on the personal qualities required for the ministry. (201) Although Martineau confessed that he disliked the Congregational form of church government, his emphasis on a well-trained and educated ministry, in fact emulated the practice of the Independents who had seldom shared the Methodist mistrust of a scholarly ministry, and were proud of their colleges and of the education given to their ministers.

Central to this whole process of calling and training for the ministry was Martineau's assertion that the minister must be more than a simple theist: he must be someone who acknowledged his discipleship to Jesus Christ. This was clearly stated in Martineau's letters to the Rev. Valentine Davis concerning Mr. Voysey's application for the Unitarian ministry:

That a spiritual theist such as you describe may be personally qualified for the duties of a minister and perform them effectively for a likeminded congregation I do not for a moment doubt: and this seems to me the only thing for which you contend. My position is that, if (by Triennial Meeting or otherwise) we are to have an organised Church, identical with that whose chapels and churches we inherit, it must continue to be Christian; else, the identity is lost, and inheritance is forfeited. (202)

### The Status and Function of the Ministry

Early in his career Martineau rejected what he saw as the Roman Catholic idea of the Church where the Priesthood issued the commands and the laity obeyed. (203) He also rejected the Anglican system of ministry in which the priest identified divine authority with himself and his official acts. (204) Martineau saw the ministry much more in traditional Nonconformist terms, where the minister was not essentially different from

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201. Suggestions on Church Organisation, pp.18, 19.

202. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, March 5th. 1897.

203. The Rationale of Religious Inquiry, third edition, p.48.

204. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.456.

any other disciples of Christ, but was given training in special subjects, set aside from his ordinary work, and given opportunities for prayer and study, in order that he could be of help to the whole congregation and community:

He (the minister) does not pretend to do anything for man, from a level other than their own; but only to be with them, side by side, to own their weariness, to take on him as he can their heavy burdens, to grope with them, perhaps before them, through the dark and winding ways, and report the trembling gleams which betray the fields of light. When he speaks to them, he has but to interpret the inmost experiences of our humanity, to find the pathetic meanings which lie in the records of every soul, but which, being writ in invisible ink, remain undeciphered and dumb till the warm breath and the low music of a congenial voice read them off into hymn and prayer. (205)

The ministry had this prophetic function of awakening in men and women the sympathies of common sorrow, common sanctity, and common insight, which were already present in their lives.

Martineau was not alone in re-examining the role of the ministry. The Methodists under Bunting were evolving their own form of ministry, and the Oxford Movement had raised important questions for the Church of England concerning its ministry. It was also an issue being discussed by the Roman Catholics. It is interesting to note that at the First Vatican Council, meeting within a decade of Martineau expounding this view of the ministry, the Roman Catholic Church issued a statement which was completely at variance to Martineau's position:

But the Church of Christ is not a community of equals in which all the faithful have the same rights. It is a society of unequals, not only because among the faithful some are clerics and some are laymen, but particularly because there is in the Church the power of God whereby to some it is given to sanctify, teach, and govern, and to others not. (206)

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205. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, p.457.

206. Vatican I Schema: quoted by Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (Dublin, 1974), p.35.

Martineau saw the minister as 'a man among men' who took a common platform with his people, and as such deserved their support and encouragement in his duties as preacher and pastor. (207) He recognised that congregations made heavy demands upon their ministers, as can be seen from his humorous description contained in his address delivered at the induction service for a new minister in Bolton:

he is by one expected, as pastor, to circulate freely over the vast area from which every Nonconformist Church is gathered; by another, as if he had a parochial charge, to look up the special district of his own chapel, and call the neighbours to his fold; by a third, to go forth as missionary into the villages around, and start fresh centres of kindred life; by a fourth, to work up the schools into the highest efficiency; by a fifth, to be active in the public institutions of the town; by a sixth, to be intellectually in the van of modern knowledge; and by all, to preach always with thought so fresh and heart so deep as to rouse the languid and not disappoint the wise. In the early church of Christ, as drawn for us in the living words of Paul, the gifts and graces were separately distributed, and divided to every man his work, as the Spirit willed; not all were teachers; not all evangelists; not all interpreters; nor all administrators; nor all had the spirit of prophets; nor all, knowledge of the learned; nor all the tongue of fire. But in our time, there is scarce an aptitude which someone is not found to require in the minister; ... (208)

The duties of the minister were not confined solely to the Church: he had a wider function in being the representative of the Church in the community. With this responsibility went a concern for moral relationships in the industrial, municipal and national communities. He had a duty to promote, by his actions, speech and advice, social trust and public righteousness. (209)

Finally Martineau maintained that the minister must be a theologian and keep abreast of modern learning; a religion which rested only on affections and emotions would soon dry up:

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207. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, pp.458-59.

208. National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, pp.451-52.

209. James Martineau, The Charge to the Minister and Congregation on the occasion of the Induction of the Rev. Alexander Gordon (London, Liverpool and Manchester, 1864), p.15.

There may have been times when the fervent spirit alone without much culture of mind, was adequate to every need of the Church; but in our age the prophet of power must be the theologian too ... if we leave all rich intellect and scholarly accomplishment outside, and then try to speak to them from our lower level; who does not see the inevitable issue? The affections themselves cannot long co-exist with stagnant intelligence; and cold as may seem the winds that stir the waters of thought, they are needed to quicken the pulses of the heart, to flush the cheek with love, and brace the will to act. (210)

Viewed from an Anglo-Catholic perspective, Martineau's doctrine of the ministry would be very low. He saw ministers and lay people on the same ecclesiastical level, although they performed different tasks. He attributed to the minister no special powers, other than those of his own personality and ability. He saw ministers and laity as co-partners in a joint enterprise. Yet from another point of view he held a high doctrine of the ministry. Martineau's plan ensured that ministers were carefully selected and rigorously trained. They were to be the guardians of the gospel, and the Churches' representatives in society. They were not simply to be appointed by congregations but were to be called by God. This in itself suggests that ministers were not just a useful appendage to the Church, but were a necessity, at least for the current age, if not for all time; for God would not call into being that which need not exist. Martineau's whole concept of church organisation was centred on the need to provide a well-trained and professional ministry in all the areas of the Church's work; he believed that on this the future of the Church depended.

#### CHURCH ORGANISATION

Martineau's attempt to form a Presbyterian Church, and the attempts of his opponents to form a Unitarian Denomination, were part of the movement in nineteenth-century England towards denominationalism; each denomination having its own distinctive organisation, its own theological colleges and its own newspaper. This movement towards central church government continued throughout the century and was only deterred in the third and

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210. The Charge to the Minister and Congregation, pp.15-16.

fourth decades by the problems facing the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Although Wesleyan Methodism had been declared a separate denomination in 1795 it was some thirty years later before Bunting organised the Connexion on a denominational basis. Similarly, between 1830 and 1860 the Independents formed themselves into something resembling a modern denomination. Later in the century the Presbyterian Church of England was formed and in 1891 the General and Particular Baptists were fused into one organisation. Martineau's desire for a Presbyterian Church, although arising out of several factors, was part of the same movement, and was influenced by the success of other denominations during the Victorian Era.

The concept of the church became increasingly important for Martineau in his mature years. This is clearly shown by comparing Hymns for the Christian Church and Home (1840) and Hymns of Praise and Prayer (1876); the earlier book had only two small sections on the Church comprising six hymns in all, while the later volume contained an extensive collection, in excess of one hundred hymns under the title of 'The Church'. In his earlier years Martineau was more concerned with direct theological issues than with the practical problems of church organisation, and indeed he did not put forward a comprehensive scheme of church organisation until he was over eighty years of age; although in the 1840s Martineau (assisted by John James Tayler) had attempted unsuccessfully to establish a local form of Presbyterian church government in Lancashire. (211)

Why then did Martineau advocate the adoption of a Presbyterian form of church government for the Liberal Dissenting Churches in the 1880s? The reason seems to have been two-fold; firstly the movement to form a Unitarian denomination, which Martineau had consistently opposed, appeared to be gaining momentum; and secondly Martineau's increasing dissatisfaction with congregational government led him to look for alternative forms of church organisation.

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211. The Christian Life, 13 (1887), 312.



### Martineau's opposition to a Unitarian Denomination

Martineau's robust and increasing opposition to the formation of a Unitarian denomination suggests that he was combating mounting pressure to form such a denomination. In 1871 he expressed his opposition openly and forcefully:

I never would call my chapel a Unitarian one, nor would I ever be the minister of a place which tied itself up to Unitarian opinion. The question is not about the duty of professing Unitarian beliefs, but whether you will found a denomination which is based exclusively on the expression of personal opinion, and which will disqualify itself from receiving persons moulding themselves into the general and more comprehensive principle of a Catholic Church. (212)

Sixteen years later, Martineau brought the debate into the public arena by stating that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association stood in the way of providing a more adequate church government for Liberal Dissenters. (213) The hostile reactions to this view, printed in the subsequent editions of The Christian Life were good indications of a growing desire to form a Unitarian denomination. The ensuing debate revealed that there was a general consensus of opinion among Unitarians for better church government but that this increased union should come under the umbrella of Unitarianism rather than have a Presbyterian structure. An editorial in The Christian Reformer gave forceful expression to this view:

Four-fifths of our churches have no Presbyterian tradition associated with them at all, and those that have must go back to ancient history to pick up the fallen link ... We all know there is one thing, and one only, that so unites us, "Our Unitarianism". Then why not take the name that is really now our band of union, and hereafter eschew all "anonymous, and polyonymous names"? (214)

Martineau's scheme was propounded as an alternative to this movement but

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212. The Church of the Future, p.10.

213. The Christian Life, 13 (1887), 313.

214. The Christian Life, 14 (1888), 211.

his ideas resulted in a reaction which gave added impetus to the already developing trend for a Unitarian denomination.

#### Martineau's dissatisfaction with Congregationalism

Throughout the nineteenth century the Liberal Dissenters, for whom Martineau had devised his form of church organisation, had functioned on a congregational basis. Ian Sellers in his article 'Unitarians and Social Change' argues that it was Priestley, an ex-Independent who had 'foisted' congregationalism on to the English Presbyterians. (215) Martineau's own explanation for the congregational system was different and, in fact, to some may sound more plausible. After the Lady Hewley case he conducted some extensive research into the history of English Presbyterianism and traced its congregational form of government back to an accident of history rather than to a conscious decision of any individual or group:

The adherents of Richard Baxter, whose children we are, and in whose Meeting-houses we still pray, never renounced their Presbyterian church order. They clung to it through the Commonwealth; they hoped for it at the Restoration; it was no less their symbol of religious liberty than was Parliamentary legislation of civil liberty; and both were covered by their patriotic vows. In devotion to it, in 1662, they refused to bend to Royal falsehood and hierarchical assumption: they became outcasts on St. Bartholomew's Day; their ejected ministers were silenced and outlawed; their worship was prohibited; their schools were closed; - their whole system was broken up! What common religious life their families had, by twos and threes, was clandestine and scattered. And even when, with the gradual relaxation of police vigilance, private persons could gather, in holes and corners, for stated worship, it was but in detached instances; and without the possibility of combined action. Not till 1689 did the Toleration Act give them a restricted legal existence; so that, for 27 years, their whole order of church life lay in ruins. During that time, the directors of it had passed away; a new generation had grown up unfamiliar with its habits; and the materials for its reconstruction had crumbled in decay. All that the remnant could do was to raise and sustain a "Meeting-house" here and there, and concentrate attention on its separate affairs, so as to train each "little flock" to hold its own ground. What does this story mean? It means that they were forced into the congregational modus

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215. Ian Sellers, 'Unitarians and Social Change,' Hibbert Journal, 61 (1962), 124.

vivendi by the utter destruction of their favourite  
Presbyterian organisation. (216)

Even though Martineau's argument may appear to be plausible, neither he nor Sellers have given a completely satisfactory explanation for the existence of a congregational form of church government in English Liberal Dissent. Ian Sellers apparently takes no account of the fact, which Martineau had pointed out, that after the Toleration Act congregations were reformed on an individual basis, and not on a denominational one; thus Priestley would have come into an already existing congregational system. Martineau's case also has its weakness in that although the adherents of Richard Baxter perhaps never 'renounced' their Presbyterianism, neither did they affirm it, if they followed Baxter closely.

Against this existing congregational system, Martineau made three objections. The first was that it did not take sufficient account of other Christians and other Churches outside the immediate fellowship. Congregationalism was an ideal form of church government in an isolated village or an oasis, but in practice the individual congregation was surrounded by other churches who needed to be taken into account in formulating its structures:

The elementary form is that of a village community, a simple group of homogeneous families, living under equal conditions, by rules of their own framing, under elders of their own choice. Such a community might be completely self-sufficing, if it existed as an oasis in the desert; its disputes adjusted by elders; its laws and imposts and elections determined by the general vote. The inadequacy of this provision reveals itself when other communities multiply around, out of relation with which, sympathetic or competitive, complexities arise which the separate autonomies cannot resolve ... Precisely this is the congregational system in the Church. True, each Christian communion in a Proseucha is complete in itself, so long as there is no other; just as a family of three is complete, till there are four, five, six. But each addition brings new duties, new affections, new subordination; and the pride of independence and the right of indifference, in the separate units, are thenceforward out of place and constitute a denial of obligation. Not even the bonds of

Christian sympathy suffice to prevent feuds of divergencies among a number of co-equal but detached societies; (217)

Another inherent weakness in congregationalism was the isolation of small rural congregations. Although in the eighteenth century Priestley had maintained that churches organised on an independent or congregational basis had largely retained their membership, (218) Martineau (writing in the following century) argued that no form of congregationalism had done well in remote country areas where it had been eclipsed by the Methodists with their connexional system.

No branch of the Christian Church ecclesiastically unorganised has ever turned to account the scattered resources of character or met the inconspicuous needs of thirsting souls that are no less present in sparse than in concentrated populations. Whether its financial system is legally instituted or voluntary, it is indispensable to provide for diverting the overflow of wealth at the great centres to the nurture of village religion. (219)

Martineau's third and strongest objection to the congregational system was that the independence of each worshipping community meant that many small or poor congregations were unable to afford the services of a trained minister.

To speak of the self-adequacy of a village congregation, of miners, factory "hands", and others of the wage earning class, whose subscriptions, even if capped by a ten pound note from some employer, could provide neither building nor pastor, seems to me a poor mockery. (220)

He added that even if the members of such a congregation were able to erect a building they would be unlikely to secure the services of an educated minister.

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217. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.23.

218. Joseph Priestley, A Free Address to Protestant Dissenters, as such, particularly to Unitarian Christians, abridged from the second edition of 1772 (Newcastle, 1815), p.42.

219. The Christian Life, 13 (1887), 312, 13.

220. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.4.

## Martineau Advocated a Presbyterian Form of Church Government

Martineau based his reconstruction of church organisation on his desire to place an educated minister in every pulpit. This was necessary, not only to enable small rural congregations to hear sound preaching, but also to avoid the unchristian class distinction which he felt was exhibited every Sunday in rural England.

A village Sunday, which exhibits all the gentry streaming into one place of worship, and all the peasantry into another; a plain chapel, where there are only labourers with their families on the benches, and one who might be their foreman in the pulpit, are unseemly products of a Christian civilisation, which professes to make of rich and poor, of gentle and simple, one Family of God, with equal need of mercy, equal ties of duty, and equal hopes of heaven. To prevent this irreligious separation of classes, several changes, no doubt, are needed. But one only do I here name as indispensable; in every place, you must aim to plant a minister of religion, qualified for welcome access everywhere, with range of thought and sympathy over the whole gamut of social experience, and unembarrassed power, through enthusiasm of conviction, to communicate himself to others. (221)

It could, of course, be argued against Martineau that the social divisions of Sunday would have been avoided if everyone simply attended the Church of England. In answer to such a proposition Martineau would have raised the question of conscience and the inability of many to accept the Thirty Nine Articles. (222)

His desire to place a trained minister with every congregation was a determining factor in Martineau's ecclesiology, and he noted with some admiration how non-congregational churches had been able to achieve this objective:

See how effectually this problem, of country pastorates, is solved in churches not Congregational; in the village parishes of England, where the Sabbath bells gather worshippers of all conditions into the same sanctuary, without involving any harsh inadequacy in the services, the

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221. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.5.

222. See James Martineau, 'Why Dissent', in Essays, Reviews and Addresses, IV, 147-164.

building, or the preacher, and an accomplished and devoted minister, like a George Herbert or a Wilson, can move independently through cottages and halls, breathing the very spirit of a Christian life on all; and in the Scottish Highlands, where the manse is the home of a pastor no less highly trained than the occupant of a city pulpit, and the family of the laird and the cottier meet in the same kirk. (223)

Over and against the congregational system of each church paying its own minister, Martineau proposed a scheme whereby every minister should be provided with 'a church stipend, from Headquarters of £150 a year.' (224) He based his scheme on the 'Sustentation Fund' of the Free Kirk of Scotland, which had operated successfully for some forty-four years, and paid its ministers a stipend of £160 per annum. (225)

Such a plan necessitated a connexional form of church government replacing the old congregational system. It seemed natural to Martineau that Liberal Dissent, because of its historical roots, should adopt a form of central government modelled on a Presbyterian system with District Boards and a General Assembly. This conviction was strengthened because he saw the remnants of Presbyterianism still present in some of the surviving associations.

Look round you over the land, and does nothing from among the historic memorials of England, arrest your eye which much resembles it? In the Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire, in the West of England Association of Presbyterian Divines, in the Warwickshire and Neighbouring Counties' Association of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, the skeleton of this very organism exists, only imperfectly clothed with the instruments and functions of a living body ... They betray plainly enough, that the framework is ready for larger agency, as soon as we choose to fill it in with a bolder trust of responsible powers ... These fraternities are but crippled survivals of bodies that once actually did all the things which I have mentioned. (226)

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223. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.6.

224. MS. letter from James Martineau to Mr. Harry Rawson, April 6th. 1888.

225. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.7.

226. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.21.

Martineau envisaged that District Board or Presbytery would comprise some twenty congregations, each congregation being represented by its minister and two church members. The Principal of any allied theological college in the District would also be entitled to a seat on the Presbytery Board. The Presbytery Meeting would exercise a supervisory function in the District, but its chief duty would be to test and certify ministers, and when necessary exercise 'the power of cancelling (or, under appeal, suspending) the certificate of admission' of any minister. (227)

In addition to the Presbyteries, Martineau also envisaged a General Assembly which would be the supreme governing body of the Church. This would be composed of ten laymen and five ministers from each Presbytery, together with the President and the Professors of associated theological colleges. The Assembly would be known as the 'English Presbyterian General Assembly'. Martineau chose this name because it was non-doctrinal and denoted 'a particular grouping and interdependence of worshipping Christian congregations'. He also believed that the name English Presbyterian had a historical significance for his own group of churches, and through its adoption 'the broken links of our history' would be refastened. (228)

Martineau widened the concept of Church membership so that every member of a church would also be entitled to a seat in any other affiliated chapel. This had implications for the widespread practice of pew rents, for under the new scheme a larger proportion of pews would be needed for visitors. The custom of rented pews was so embedded into nineteenth-century Nonconformity that Martineau made no attempt to abolish it, but rather envisaged a dual system of rented pews and free-sitting pews in every affiliated chapel. (229)

Martineau's attempt to reintroduce Presbyterianism at the 'National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian

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227. Suggestions on Church Organisation, pp.20, 21.

228. Suggestions on Church Organisation, pp.25, 33, 34.

229. Suggestions on Church Organisation, p.13.

and other Non-Subscribing and Kindred Congregations' met with some support from his influential friends such as J. H. Thom and Charles Beard, one of the founders of the University of Liverpool. (230) However, these voices of support were drowned by the overwhelming opposition to Martineau's ideas which ensured that they were never adopted. There were several reasons for this. An editorial in The Christian Life maintained that although Martineau was unequalled in the sphere of philosophy, when it came to practical concerns he was a very poor organiser. (231) An unexpected source of opposition came from an article in the Christian World objecting to Martineau's use of the name English Presbyterian and pointing out that the 'name is assumed already. The English Presbyterian Church is already holding its Synod at Newcastle.' (232)

The major reason for the failure of Martineau's scheme of Church organisation was the growing movement towards the formation of a Unitarian denomination. This aspiration was not realised until 1928 when The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches was formed through an amalgamation of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association with the National Conference. This new unity was cemented by the production of a new hymn book, Hymns of Worship (1927) and a new service book, Orders of Worship (1932); both of which carried on their title pages an inscription that they were for the use of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. (233) The wide acceptance of both these books finally crushed any realistic hope of ever reviving Presbyterianism among English Liberal Dissent. Thus what Martineau had so vigorously fought against came into being a quarter of a century after his death.

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230. H. McLachlan, Record of a Family, 1800-1933 (Manchester, 1935), p.48.

231. The Christian Life, May 5th. 1888.

232. Christian World, May 3rd. 1888.

233. H. L. Short The English Presbyterians, p.285.



## CONCLUSION

Martineau suffered a defeat on the issue of church organisation. His distinctive contribution to Unitarianism has been questioned by Professor R. K. Webb, who has suggested that the real watershed for nineteenth-century Unitarianism was not associated with the 'new wine' of Martineau, but came much later in the century with the re-emergence of anti-supernaturalism and other rival theologies:

Despite the often bitter warfare, much of the old outlook persisted among the eventual victors. (Martineau and his colleagues) The commitment to pursuing truth and the Priestleyan investment in science and modernity helped to save Unitarians from the traumas that so profoundly affected so many Victorians in the wake of scientific and critical learning. Indeed, if one reads Martineau's A Study of Religion or the scientific sermons of many of his contemporaries, the degree to which the old argument from design survives in cosmically expanded form is remarkable, notwithstanding all the dismissive remarks that Thom and J. J. Tayler had made about "evidences" in the middle of the century. It was the frank anti-supernaturalism of the last third of the century and the many competing enthusiasms in doctrine and practice that marked the true qualitative change, not the earlier conflict of Old and New Schools.  
(234)

Professor Webb is quite right in his assertion that an important turning point occurred among English Unitarians towards the end of the century. Something of this a movement is reflected in Martineau's opposition to those who wanted Unitarianism to move in the directions of general theism and world religions. Professor Webb is also correct in his assertion that Martineau retained a scientific strand within his religious thought; this can clearly be detected in some of his sermons, (235) and also in his battles against Spencer and Tyndall, where he contended for an

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234. R. K. Webb, 'View of Unitarianism from Halley's Comet', Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, 18 (1986), 189-190. The terms 'Old School' and 'New School' were used by the Unitarian historian H. L. Short in referring respectively to Joseph Priestley and his associates, and James Martineau and his colleagues.

235. See James Martineau, Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.127 and James Martineau, Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, I, 205.

intellectually satisfying religion. However it would be inaccurate to follow Professor Webb's train of thought to the conclusion that essentially Martineau continued the major emphasis of Priestley, and that the only real change of direction for Unitarianism came at the end of the century. In the years following the Liverpool Controversy of 1839, Martineau and his colleagues, Tayler, Thom and Wicksteed, exerted a formative influence, partly through their domination of Manchester College and their control of The Christian Teacher, which radically altered the course of English Unitarianism. They changed the direction of Unitarianism by challenging the assumptions of an orthodoxy in Christian thought, by changing the philosophical emphasis away from determinism to free will and personal responsibility, and by 'spiritualising' the faith.

As early as 1840, with the publication of Hymns for the Christian Church and Home, drawn from a wide variety of spirituality, Martineau was challenging the concept of an orthodoxy which held that there was only one right way of perceiving truth, and that a church was constituted only by those who had correctly apprehended that truth. Martineau in writing to Valentine Davis gave an account of the position within Unitarianism prior to his influence.

The Unitarians of that day, - in England all events, - were moulded by leaders, - Priestley from the orthodox Dissenters, Lindsey from the Church of England, - who had simply adopted a new theology, without moving a hair's breadth from their old assumption, that Christian communion must be based on concurrence of theological doctrine. (236)

Thus, according to Martineau, Priestley believed that there was an orthodoxy, even if not the one propounded by the Church of England. Priestley's production of a catechism for young people, which acted as a standard of belief, would tend to support this view. Martineau and his colleagues gave a new direction to Unitarianism; a direction which had

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236. MS. letter from James Martineau to the Rev. Valentine Davis, December 22nd. 1891.

affinities with the thought of Richard Baxter and the early Presbyterians in that they shunned the idea of uniformity in belief. In place of the idea of orthodoxy, Martineau advocated a common devotion to the person of Christ and a shared spiritual communion.

Martineau and his friends also made an important philosophical change in English Unitarianism, moving away from Priestley's determinism toward an emphasis on free will and personal responsibility. Along with this assertion of human freedom went a new stress on the claims of conscience. Martineau did not claim to be the originator of this movement, and he attributed much of its inspiration to Coleridge and the American Channing. But there seems little doubt that Martineau and his associates were instrumental in popularising such sentiments among English Unitarians.

Another important area where Martineau broke away from the Old School of Priestley was his emphasis on the religion of the spirit over and against the old rational and biblical Unitarianism. This was the most distinctive contribution which Martineau made in changing the direction of English Unitarianism. In a sermon of 1869 he set out his own understanding of the three stages of the development of Unitarianism: the first was the 'religion of Causation', the second 'the religion of Conscience', and the third 'the religion of the Spirit'. This last stage, for which Martineau was largely responsible, stressed the spiritual relationship between God and humanity.

Here then it is that there is room for true communion, - that Spirit may meet Spirit, and that the sacred silence may itself speak the exchange of love ... The life with God then, of which saintly men in every age have testified, is no illusion of enthusiasm, but an ascent, through simple surrender, to the higher region of the soul, the very watch tower whence there is the clearest and the largest view. The bridge is thus complete between the Divine and the human personality; and we crown the religion of Causation, and the religion of Conscience, by the religion of the Spirit. (237)

This emphasis on the spirit of man communing with the Spirit of God is a constant theme running through Martineau's writings. In a sermon of 1862 he maintained that it was a key function of the Church to highlight this relationship between God and humanity.

And it is precisely ... to bring us home from the works and ways of God to communion with himself; to make time and place and lot, and life and death, and all things, no longer able to separate us from him, that the training and worship of the Christian Church exists. (238)

Martineau was able to disseminate this particular emphasison on the spiritual union of man with God throughout Unitarianism in several ways: through his hymn books, his published prayers, and sermons, and in his promotion of gothic church architecture, which he felt was conducive to the religion of the Spirit he was trying to encourage.

Martineau's ability as a hymnologist and his inspired editorship of Hymns for the Christian Church and Home (1840) and Hymns of Praise and Prayer (1873) had a profound impact upon Unitarianism. If the essential character of Methodism has been better preserved by Charles Wesley's hymns than by John Wesley's sermons, the wide use of Martineau's hymn books also had an extensive theological and devotional influence on the churches which used them. An entry in Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology (1907) pays tribute to the quality of Hymns for the Christian Church and Home and acknowledges the wide impact the book made:

In 1840 appeared the book which has made the most striking epoch in the history of Unitarian hymnody ... Hymns for the Christian Church and Home. Collected and edited by James Martineau. London, 1840, may be taken as the best expression of the new spirit of devotion which, largely through the influence of Channing, had for some time been making its way in their societies. When the new hymn-book appeared Dr. Martineau was minister at Paradise Street Chapel, Liverpool. It was to some extent only a prophecy of what was to be, for the book was received at first with objection in some quarters; but quickly made its way, and, ... superseded all earlier collections. It is now the book

most widely used among Unitarians in England. (239)

The article also maintained that Hymns of Praise and Prayer (1873) was the second most used hymn book among English Unitarians.

If it is true, as Bernard Manning has suggested, that through their hymns 'Dissenters have preserved intact (even better than churches with more elaborate safeguards) the full catholic and evangelical faith', (240) than it would not be unreasonable to conclude that Martineau profoundly influenced the devotional and spiritual life of Unitarians through the widespread use of his hymn books in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Martineau also influenced Unitarian spirituality through his editorship of Common Prayer for Christian Worship (1862) which became a kind of 'archetype' for Unitarian liturgy. The anonymous preface to the work explains that the book was compiled at the request of a group of London ministers under the leadership of Dr. Sadler of Hampstead, and that Martineau's influence was expressed in the ninth and tenth services, (241) and ultimately in the revision of the complete work. The aim in producing the book was 'to revise the services in use in the Church of England, and to make additions from other services'. (242) The book consisted of ten liturgical services, a collection of Collects for the Christian Year, prayers of thanksgiving, and several special services including those for marriage, confirmation and burial of the dead. It has been suggested that in Martineau, Nonconformity produced a liturgical editor of rare genius for the first time. (243)

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239. A Dictionary of Hymnology, ed. John Julian, Revised Edition (London, 1907), p.1194.

240. Bernard Manning, The Hymns of Wesley and Watts (London, 1942), p.143.

241. Common Prayer for Christian Worship (London, 1862), p.vii.

242. A. Elliott Peaston, 'Nineteenth Century Liturgies', Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, 7 (1940), 220.

243. Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society (1940), 219.

Horton Davies lends weight to the view that Martineau changed the course of Liberal Dissent: Davies pointed out that the liturgical watershed for Unitarianism occurred in 1862 with Martineau's contribution to Common Prayer for Christian Worship (244) The distinctive influence of Martineau, and the new direction he gave to Unitarian worship, is acknowledged in the Preface of that book:

Every age, in taking up the chorus of ancient devotion, throws in some quality of tone not heard before: the hymn is the same, but the voice is different. As in literature and art, so in religion, thought and affection need something more than self-repetition: they demand some freshness of movement: they are as running waters, which, however mighty and noble the receptacles they have already filled, still overflow, and cannot stay. It is therefore no irreverence towards the past, - rather it is a testimony to its vivifying power, to feel a want beyond its resources of devotional expression; nor is any generation of the Christian Church true to its inheritance, which pretends to live upon it, yet has nothing to add to it. With a view to reach more effectually some chords of modern feeling, certain of the forms now published were entrusted for re-construction to another hand. The result was not a re-arrangement, as was at first contemplated, but the preparation of two new Services, the Ninth and Tenth; which left no doubt in the minds of those who have taken the most active part in this attempt, of the desirability of combining treasures new and old. (245)

Martineau worked a revolution which changed the direction of Unitarian thought and feeling, away from an excessive rationalism to the 'religion of the Spirit', which found expression in many of the lovely prayers he wrote for Common Prayer for Christian Worship:

O God, who leadest us through seasons of life to be partakers of thine eternity; the shadows of our evening hasten on. Quicken us betimes: and spare us that sad word, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' Anew we dedicate ourselves to thee. We would ask nothing, reserve nothing, for ourselves, save only leave to go whither thou mayst guide, to live not far from thee, and die into thy nearer light. Content to accept the reproach of truth and the self-denials of pure integrity, we would

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244. Horton Davis, Worship and Theology in England: From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900 (London and Princeton, 1962), p.267.

245. Common Prayer for Christian Worship, pp.vi-vii.

take upon us the yoke of Christ, whom it behoved to suffer ere he entered into his glory. (246)

Common Prayer for Christian Worship was the most extensively used liturgical book in nineteenth-century Unitarianism, and through its pages Martineau exerted his new emphasis on Liberal Dissent.

This stress on the spirit of religion, and on inward devoutness and spirituality were further disseminated by Martineau in his other important book of prayers, Home Prayers (1891), and his two major collections of sermons, Endeavours after the Christian Life (1843) and Hours of Thought on Sacred Things (1876 and 1879). These sermons were widely read and extensively used both within and outside Unitarianism.

The new religious outlook which Martineau was propagating was also reflected in changing church architecture. Although neo-Gothic architecture was used in England at the end of the eighteenth century and for some of the 'Commissioners' Churches' of the 1820s, it was Augustus Welby Pugin and the Oxford Movement which popularised Gothic architecture and the idea that it was distinctively Christian. Pugin in A Parallel between the Architecture of the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (1836) reveals that his major concern with Gothic architecture arose out of his belief in its Christian symbolism. Similarly the Tractarians saw Gothic buildings as representing the age of faith. Martineau, Thom, Tayler and Wicksteed, like the members of the Oxford Movement, were affected by the Romanticism of the nineteenth century; they too had been influenced by Scott who had found a new world in the old world, and by Wordsworth who had found an equally new world in the beauty of nature. While intellectually they could not follow the direction of the Oxford Movement, it is not surprising to find them desiring the same beauty in their worship and in their architecture. It was Martineau, and his colleagues, who were the first among dissenters consciously to adopt the Gothic style of church building which they saw as more devotional, and as helping to foster the

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246. Common Prayer for Christian Worship, tenth service.

spirit of worship they were trying to promote. J. J. Tayler had his church in Manchester rebuilt in 1839 and engaged Sir Charles Barry, the architect of the new Houses of Parliament to design a Gothic church which would provide the devotional atmosphere he was seeking. Over the next decade new Gothic churches were erected at Hyde (1848), Mill-hill, Leeds (1848), Hope Street, Liverpool (1849) and at Banbury (1850). These new buildings were invariably opened by one of the four friends. (247) Martineau's Hope Street Church was steeped in mediaeval gloom, with stained glass windows, a side pulpit and high altar, stone figures and elaborately carved dark wood pews. The style was in sharp contrast to the light and airy, square or octagonal chapels of Priestley's rational dissent.

Thus despite Professor Webb's view, it does appear that Martineau and his friends heralded a new phase in the history of Liberal Dissent; a view which is supported by H. L. Short and Ian Sellers. (248)

Martineau's was not a total success story. As we have noted, he was unsuccessful in his attempt to re-organise his group of churches on Presbyterian lines. He also failed in his desire to bridge the gap between Unitarianism, the Church of England, and the Free Churches. This failure was in part due to the fact that he ultimately lost key theological battles in Unitarianism over the centrality of Christ, and the adoption of the name Unitarian by congregations and groups of Churches.

Martineau however did present a consistent theology of the Church and a scheme of union for the Church which was not based on detailed doctrinal agreement. In the present age where many have come to believe that doctrines may only be approximations of the truth, and where several schemes of unity based on doctrinal agreement have failed, Martineau's approach to Christian unity deserves further serious consideration:

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247. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, p.259.

248. H. L. Short, The English Presbyterians, p.254.  
Ian Sellers, Hibbert Journal, 61 (1962), 127.



To heal the broken unity of Christendom, the scholar may rely on the ultimate establishment of his critical results; the ecclesiast may plan treaties of peace and fusion of doctrine between Church and Church: but meanwhile, those who find it more congenial to pass behind the whole field of theological divergency, and linger near the common springs of all human piety and hope, may perhaps be preparing some first lines of a true Eirenikon. (249)

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249. Endeavours after the Christian Life, p.xviii.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has been largely concerned with the ideas expressed in Martineau's writings, but it is important to recognise that his influence was not solely exerted through the content of his work, but also through the beautiful style of his English prose, which became a most effective vehicle for conveying these ideas. He attracted others not by emotional rhetoric and eloquence but by his sincere, deeply thought over, and beautifully-expressed prayers, lectures and sermons.

It is his sermons which have the most lasting value of all his works. In the Preface of Hours of Thought on Sacred Things (1876) he said that his previous collection of sermons seemed 'more true to the feelings of the present time than to that of the last generation' (1) (They were published in 1840.) There is a sense in which Martineau was often ahead of his time, in that many of his ideas which were thought of as heretical in the nineteenth century are widely acceptable today.

In this study I have tried to show that Martineau was not simply influenced by Unitarian sources, but that he read widely and drew his inspiration from a broader range of religious ideas and spiritual traditions than his biographers were willing to admit. He was indebted both to those within and outside Unitarianism, which made him more sympathetic to those belonging to other communions, and enabled him more effectively to meet the challenges of Materialism and Agnosticism. I have also shown that his doctrines of Christ and the Church were clearly formulated and more important than had been previously supposed.

From our perspective in the late twentieth century, Martineau is not a well-known Victorian figure, and consequently writers who have mentioned him have sometimes done so after only a superficial glance at his works, or

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1. James Martineau, Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, 2 vols. (London, 1876, 1879), I, iii.

by taking their material from secondary sources. This practice can clearly be seen in the work of B. M. G. Reardon, who in his book From Coleridge to Gore (1971) obviously took his informative section on Martineau directly from V. F. Storr's, The Development of English theology in the Nineteenth Century (1913). With this practice goes the tendency to perpetuate misconceptions about Martineau and his religious thought, as can clearly be seen in Christian Theology Since 1600 (1970) in which Professor Cunliffe-Jones maintained that in Martineau's system of thought Jesus Christ is absolutely separated from the Church. (2)

I offer this study in an attempt to correct this tendency, and in the hope of laying a foundation for others who will in the future study other aspects of Martineau's life and thought.

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2. H. Cunliffe-Jones, Christian Theology Since 1600 (London, 1970), p.95.

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## APPENDIX A

### 'BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA'

A few short sections from the 'Biographical Memoranda' are included in The Life and Letters of James Martineau by Drummond and Upton, and in James Martineau by Estlin Carpenter, but most of it remains unpublished and until now has never been transcribed from Martineau's own handwriting.

## Biographical Memoranda

1805        I was born in Norwich April 21, 1805, the 7th in a family of 8; and for nearly 7 years enjoyed the disadvantageous privilege of being regarded as the last child of my parents. My father, Thomas, a manufacturer and wine-merchant, was the youngest, as my Norwich uncle, Philip - the eminent surgeon - was the eldest of a large family of Huguenot descent, whose English founder, Gaston (also a surgeon) settled in Norwich as an exile after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. My mother, Elizabeth Rankin, was the eldest daughter of Mr. Robert R., a wholesale grocer and sugar-refiner of Newcastle upon Tyne; and was perhaps the most capable member of a family whose standard of ability and character was above the average. Of great energy and quickness of resource, and married to a man of more tenderness and moral refinement than force of self-assertion, she naturally played the chief part in the governance of the household, though always supported by the authority and admiration of her husband. Her children were trained in wholesome habits and clever arts, and stimulated by her sparkling talk; and though my childhood was not happy, I attribute this, not to any sharp or repressive discipline on her part or my father's, but to well-meant yet persecuting sport on the part of my older brothers, and to the rough treatment of a great public school; and still more to the simple absence of any apprehensive sympathy with the growing inner life of the boy.

1809        My earliest recollection is of a journey to Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1809. There was a post-chaise full of us; and as the child of the party, I was placed on a low stool, riding backwards. To this position, at the bottom of a jolting well, I owe probably the chief memory I retain of that journey: for, beyond the impression of its four days' misery from sickness, no images remain, except of Durham Cathedral, which renewed in me, two years ago, the old childish awe; and of some wrongful treatment which I suffered at my grandfather's through the lying intrigues of an over-favoured cousin. The first burning sense of injustice, I suppose, is never forgot.



Of my lessons at home during childhood I remember nothing. But from  
1815 - about 1815 to 1819, I was a day-scholar at Edward Valpy's public Grammar  
1819 School in the Cathedral close; and, though having the benefit, there new,  
of an English Latin grammar, went through the regular drill of sense and  
nonsense verses, of mnemonic lines, and mythologic compends. The school  
had been under the management of Dr. Parr; and its standard of classical  
attainment was more than respectable. I left it before reaching its highest  
form; but not without having made fair progress in Latin, and a good start  
in Greek; though my reading in the latter was as yet limited to Homer and  
Xenophon. Among my 230 schoolfellows were several who afterwards rose to  
distinction in civil or military life: James Brooke, - Rajah of Sarawak;  
Stodart, who perished with Conolly in Bokhara; George Borrow, the writer  
and actor of romance; Edw<sup>d</sup>. Rigby and John Dalrymple, eminent practitioners  
of the medical art. The last three were my companions in study and in play;  
and of the first two, who were 2 or 3 years older, I have a clear remembrance,  
especially of Stodart's tall figure and calm commanding face. In spite of  
school friendships however those years of boyhood were not bright. The  
day scholars were despised by the boarders; and there were big tyrants among  
themselves who, especially if they were blockheads, bullied the weaker boys  
into saving them trouble and doing their work; and though I did not shrink  
from a race or a battle with a competitor fairly matched, I suffered keenly  
under the smart of hopeless oppression and unmerited insult. The studies  
also of which I was naturally most fond, - the mathematical - were kept  
in a tantalizing subordination: so that, when I had learned enough to feel  
my own backwardness in them, I became restive under my narrow opportunities  
for their pursuit. Our teacher in geometry, - a Mr. Priest, - was not  
a very popular personage with the boys in general, any more than Euclid  
himself w<sup>d</sup>. have been. But to me the image of the grave and taciturn man,  
with somewhat stooping figure, bald head, and suffering face, is grateful  
from its association with awakening tastes and helpful impulse.

1819-21        The need of some change in the course of my education had probably been felt by my father and mother, when my sister Harriet brought home with her the happy fruits of a period of school-life in Bristol, and spoke with enthusiastic gratitude of the influence over her of Dr. Lant Carpenter's classes and pulpit services. My father, always ready to strain every nerve to advance the education of his children, determined to find the 100 guineas a year which would make me one of Dr. C's dozen pupils: and for two years I enjoyed that inestimable privilege. This was to me the real birth-time of mind and character, - partly, no doubt as it is to every one, from mere natural development; but largely also, from the play upon me of new methods and the presence of a different atmosphere of life. Several Latin and Greek authors were added to my scanty list; and the admiration excited by Tacitus, Juvenal and the philosophical treatises of Cicero, and by Sophocles and the easier dialogues of Plato, had a permanent influence on my literary and moral feeling. Being at that time intended for the profession of a Civil Engineer, I was allowed to devote some extra time to mathematics and the elements of natural philosophy and chemistry: so that, before I left, I had been put in possession of Euclid, the Conic Sections, Plane Trigonometry and the elementary formulas of Spherical; and of the fundamental conceptions and methods of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology and Geology. But the gratitude with which I think of those years is due chiefly to the personal influence of Dr. C.; under which my conscience seemed to wake up and life to assume its proper sanctity. And as this profound impression was shared also by my habitual companions, - especially Samuel Worsley and Samuel Grey, - it both deepened the relations of friendship and was deepened by them. In the Greek Testament Class, and in that of Moral Philosophy, opportunities naturally arose for the opening of problems in the highest degree interesting to the affections and stimulating to the reflective faculties of young thinkers.

1821        Bidding adieu to school at Mids<sup>m</sup>. 1821, I accompanied my father and

mother on a visit at Newcastle-on-Tyne to my eldest sister, Mrs. T. M. Greenhow and her husband, on occasion of the christening of their first child, - the present Mrs. Francis Lupton of Beechwood near Leeds. The service (by Rev. W. Turner Sen.) was rendered memorable by the presence of not only the 4 grandparents of the infant, but also of the 2 maternal grandparents of its mother. From Newcastle we went into Cumberland, on the invitation of an old friend of my father's whom he had not met for upwards of 30 years. The pleasant days under his roof I should have less distinctly remembered, had they not given me my first sight of a range of mountains. It was only a distant view, for the house was in the neighbourhood of Cockermouth: but, whenever I could, I stole out into the garden, to look once more and renew the longing wonder with which those sunny knolls and dark hollows filled me. The longing was in some degree satisfied by a nearer but too hasty glance at the Crummoich and Buttermere hills on our way South: whence I carried away however little more than an intense sense of unvisited glories. The chief end of our journey was reached at Derby; where I was left, to enter upon my engineering training in the machine works of Mr. Fox, - residing in the family of Rev. E. Higginson.

The hours of employment were spent entirely at the turning lathe or the work bench of the model-room; and I learned neither more nor less than would be gained by any carpenter's apprentice. My master, - an ingenious and energetic man, - had himself been an artisan; and, following methods of his own devising, was hardly competent to give systematic instruction in Mechanics, and thought it enough to put tools before me, and give me the run of his shops, and let me scramble into the rules of my business by the rough road which he had conquered. In spite of my taste for mechanical work, this total want of intellectual help disappointed me: and I looked with dismay at the prospect of devoting five years to mastering the construction of a very limited class of machines. While this discouragement was upon me, several influences combined to give a new direction to my mind. The

religious impressions made on me at Bristol seemed to deepen as I was withdrawn from their source. The death at Nottingham of my cousin's husband, Henry Turner, the young and pure-souled minister of the High Pavement Chapel, haunted me with a profound and sacred sorrow. And the incipient attachment which, seven years after, was crowned by marriage, favoured the mood of enthusiasm which impelled me towards the Christian ministry. At the end of a year, I avowed my wish to change my profession. My father, while warning me that I was courting poverty, suppressed his disappointment and bore without reproach the forfeiture of the premium he had paid for me; and engaged to bear the expense of my theological education at Manchester New College, York.

1822        The five years spent at York include, - like every college period, - considerable chapters of inward history; but only a few memorable outward changes. Without taking an equal interest in all the College classes, I made it a point of conscience to give impartial attention to the studies prescribed for each year, and was content to bear the inevitable consequences, that in this or that subject I was liable to be outstripped by specialists. Such small credit however as may attach to successful competition among twenty associates fell to my lot in some form at the end of every session open to honours. Though I had no longer any professional motive for prosecuting mathematical studies, Mr. W. Turner's admirable teaching gave them a fresh impulse of interest for me, and enabled me, before I left York, to attain the great object of my ambition, - the reading of Newton's Principia. Grateful as I was to him, however, I owed him a grudge for one thing. He taught us to do our work by the fluxional instead of the differential notation: and it cost me some trouble afterwards, when I had under my care students of Trinity College, Dublin, to master a new method, and impart a dexterity which I had hardly acquired. The same remark applies to Mr. Wellbeloved's teaching of Hebrew, without the points. Excellent Hebraists may doubtless be formed under these conditions. But scarcely had I left college when I had to prepare pupils for examination on the ordinary grammar and the pointed text; and the preliminary schooling of myself for

this study was a task of needless severity.

Within a small inner circle of the students there prevailed a spirit of devout and semi-ascetic enthusiasm which bound them together in strong affection, and subordinated their intellectual industry to higher inspirations. One effect of this was, a repugnance to prizes and honours, as an indignity offered to the intrinsic nobleness of knowledge, and a childish appeal to a lesser good when the mind is thirsting for the greater. This feeling, I remember, laid powerful hold of John Hugh Worthington and of myself, just when we had finished our competing labours for the most coveted College distinction, - a prize for the best translation into Greek of a prescribed excerpt from some English book. For six weeks we had been working at Ferguson's Roman Republic in the fond hope of making a chapter of it read like Xenophon. We had chosen our mottoes, and sealed up our M.S.S.: when lo! apart, in our separate rooms, during the lonely evening meditation, a secret shame at our poor rivalries fell upon us both; and in the morning was confessed, discussed, confirmed. We lost no time, but flung our packets at once into the fire. Our chief regret was that we thus condemned our remaining [competitors] to walk the course, and spoiled the zest of his honours.

While this fervour of spirit animated chiefly the most assiduous students, it rendered the dry life of mere intellectual industry intolerable to them, and impelled them to escape, at least on Sundays, into a higher region of activity and affection. They allied themselves with a venerable man, of remarkable force of intellect and character, who for half his life had toiled as an artizan and preached as an apostle, and now, in his old age, needed help in sustaining the village congregations which he had formed. A College Missionary Society supplied John Mason with a band of youthful coadjutors, and expended our pent-up zeal in labours which transported us from books to life. In the village of Welburn, almost at the gates of Castle Howard, the society to which we preached so increased that no room was large enough to hold it: and the students managed, during one of their

vacations, to collect the means of building a small chapel. Fancying that my engineering experience would enable me to construct anything, they insisted on my acting as architect: and it devolved upon me to draw the plans, and ride over periodically to superintend the work. On one of these visits, I met Sydney Smith on the ground, looking at the rising walls. He was incumbent of the parish, and could not regard a new conventicle with favour. On my saying, in the endeavour to parry his good-natured grumbling, that, without the chapel, the people for whom it was meant would go nowhere, he replied, "Well, well, it is a pity that they wont all come to me: but so long as you only gather and tame my refractory parishioners, I shall look upon you as my curates, to get the people ready for me."

During my York period, two family bereavements occurred, which, inwardly<sup>4?</sup> and outwardly, profoundly affected me. In 1823, we lost my eldest brother, Dr. Thomas M., who, falling into consumption, was with his wife sent to Madeira, only to bury his child there, and never himself to return. In my boyhood, his elevation of character and refinement of culture had lifted him, in spite of his sweetness of disposition, too far above me for his influence to descend upon me with power. But no sympathy was so ready as his to support my change of profession: and from that crisis, the elder brother's reserve seemed to pass away: his heart opened to me many a secret admiration and reverence, as he read his favourite poets or discussed the graver problems of life; and as the beauty and balance of his mind revealed themselves to me, I reproached myself for my early blindness, and mused upon the new image with wondering affection. Our intercourse being only occasional, his death was not so much a removal as a transfiguration. My father's death in 1826 was a larger, though less pathetic event. Business anxieties had traced their lines upon his face: his vigour, which had always depended largely on hope, had sensibly declined: and the brightness of his life was dulled, and only fitfully re-appeared. He was in the shadow, before he was lost to sight. Transparently ingenuous, faithful, honourable and gracious, he never had an enemy, except the spies and informers of the

Liverpool administration: and if he left his affairs in an entangled condition, the blameless disaster fell little on his creditors, mainly on his family. My mother, whose strength of mind rose to every emergency, conformed herself instantly and without repining, to the twofold change brought by sorrow and by misfortune; and, throwing her quick sympathies into my sisters' several projects for self-maintenance, found compensation for the partial break-up of the family circle in the new and separate interest attaching to each daughter's pursuits and experience. The troubles of governesses, and the first struggles of a literary career, presented problems strange to her; but her admirable judgement and vigilant affection rendered her counsels fertile in wise suggestion. At our age she might reasonably expect, as sole surviving parent, to exercise a decisive authority in all our affairs. But the readiness with which, in spite of unhesitating opinions, she respected our independence as we earned it, and surrendered the helm to become the witness and guest of the voyage, has always struck me as a trait of noble dignity.

As I could not let my expenses at York be a tax upon my Norwich brother, I applied for a College bursary, and received it for the remainder of my time. My vacation too was economically spent, without indulgence of wandering propensities. In the previous year, my sister Harriet and I had enjoyed, through my father's generosity, a month's pedestrian excursion through the Scottish Highlands as far North as the Broar falls and West as Loch Awe. Taking the steamer from London to Edinburgh, and the coach to Perth, we there assumed our knapsack and hand basket; and never stopped till, at the average rate of  $15\frac{1}{4}$  miles per day, we had walked 530 miles. The lines of our route are now well-known tracks, beaten by the feet of Cook's irregular troops. And we had no more exciting adventure than that, in a fruitless rush to catch a mountain sunset, I got benighted on the Cobbler, and, only by desperate runs and slides, reached the road, soaked and bruised, just as my sister was hastening to the Arrochar Inn, to arrange a torch-light search for me. But it was a delightful month. To both of us it was

a first free admission into the penetralia of natural beauty; and we walked everywhere with hushed feeling and reverent feet. We were perfectly at one, both in the defects which limited our vision and in the susceptibilities which quickened it, neither of us caring much for the savage romance of Scottish traditions, and both being intensely alive to the appeal of mountain forms and channeled glens, and the play of light and cloud with the forest, the corrie, and the lake-side. And in the fresh morning hours, before fatigue had made us laconic, the flow of eager talk, - as is usual with young people, - ran over all surfaces, - even plunged into all depths, - human and divine: with just the right proportion of individual difference to prevailing accordance for the maintenance of healthy sympathy. That journey lifted our early companionship to a higher stage, and established an affection which, though afterwards saddened, on one side at least never really changed. I was the younger by three years: but my systematic studies so far redressed the balance as to render reciprocal respect not impossible; while my sister's acute, rapid, and incisive advance to a conclusion upon every point pleasantly relieved my slower judgement and gave me courage to dismiss suspense. I was at that time, and for several years after, an enthusiastic disciple of the determinist philosophy; and was strongly tainted with the positive temper which is its frequent concomitant; yet not without such inward reserves and misgivings as to render welcome my sister's more firm and ready verdict. While she remained faithful through life to that early mode of thought, with me those "reserves and misgivings" suppressed for awhile, recovered from the shock and gained the ascendancy. The divergence led to this result:- that while my sister changed her conclusions, and I, my bases, we both cleared ourselves from incompatible admixtures, and paid the deference due to logical consistency and completeness.

1827

To return from this digression. At the close of my College course, I received a proposal which had everything in its favour, except that it laid out for me no ministerial duty. Failure of health had compelled Dr. Lant Carpenter to travel abroad, with a very uncertain prospect of any early



return to the charge of his congregation and of the 12 or 14 pupils living in his house. I was asked to take his place in his absence, and share his labours when resumed, on liberal terms of partnership. Accepting the offer, with the affectionate awe of an old scholar of the house, I entered at once upon the duties of a position to which, only 6 years before, I had looked up with unbounded trust and reverence. The household management went on, in its usual admirable way, under Mrs. C's direction, and left me free for the schoolroom and the study. But there were some pupils so advanced in culture and in age, as to demand special care and time; so that the mere teaching, ranging over many subjects and every stage, was no slight strain upon my energies. And, besides this, I was the companion of the boys in their walks and play, their referee in the preparation of their [lessons], and, above all, the trustee of parental authority, bound to study their dispositions and quicken and direct their conscience. Add to this that, being always on the spot, I was a convenient resource for the supply of Dr. C's pulpit, whenever other substitutes failed; and it will not appear surprising that I look back upon that period as one of severe tension. None the less had it many a bright hour. Through the recommendation of Dr. Prichard (author of the "Physical History of Man") I was admitted to a small, almost private, Philosophical Society, of about 12 members, at which I heard the ablest local men, - including John Foster, Herepath, Prichard, Conybeare, - discuss the newest questions of the time and the greatest questions of all time. One friend at least, Mr. Samuel Worsley, still remains from that little circle; and though unaware how much his own thoughtful suggestions and accurate geological knowledge contributed to its search for truth, he doubtless registers its evening meetings, as I do, among the privileged passages of life. Another and more kindling influence I found in the preaching and the personal acquaintance (slight as it was) of Robert Hall; whose Thursday evening services in Bradmead I attended as often as possible. Going to him with the preconceptions imparted by his magnificent printed Discourses, I was at first cast down and distressed by his hesitating

sentences and hacking voice; nor could I find in the thoughts thus uttered anything to compensate for their unhappy form. As he proceeded, however, the checking coughs became more sparse, the slipped speech more continuous, the tone richer, the meaning bolder: till at last, when, wrapped in the glow of his ascent he has lost sight of the people and the place and feels no presence but of his inward vision and his enfolding God, he fairly becomes the organ of the higher Will, and paints or pleads or prophecies in an unbroken flow of lofty and pathetic meditation. Persuasion I never found in his preaching, but the contagious elevation of a powerful mind. He influenced men by not addressing them, yet thinking aloud before them. The more he forgot them, the more did their critical mood die down, and their secret sympathy rise up and go with him, till they saw his vision and prayed his prayer. Such, at least, is my recollection of this great preacher.

1828        I remained at Bristol only a year. At the end of that time I was invited, on occasion of the retirement of Rev. Philip Taylor from active duty, to the post of Junior Minister of Eustace St. Presbyterian Meeting House, Dublin; the Senior acting pastor being the Rev. Joseph Hutton. Intent upon reaching the end to which I had dedicated myself, I accepted the invitation, disregarding the surrender which it involved of half my income. My decision induced Dr. C. to relinquish his boys' school, and devote his house to the education of girls under the direction of Mrs. C. and his daughters. I was in consequence urged to take with me to Dublin several of our older pupils; and especially to provide a home which would enable two brothers, to whom I was much attached, to live with their widowed mother under my roof. She had sufficient confidence in me to offer the necessary advances (nearly £700) for purchasing the leasehold interest of an adequate house: and in Dec<sup>m</sup>. 1828, I married Helen, eldest child of Rev. Edw<sup>d</sup>. Higginson of Derby, and took my wife home to the administration of a large and various household, including half-a-dozen pupils, half of them entered at Trinity College, and half still under my sole care. I had already been ordained by the Dublin Presbytery of the Synod of Munster,

and in exercise of my pastoral functions for 6 months. These were less arduous than I could wish: the congregation being very small, and assembling only once each Sunday, and in every way disposed to give both themselves and their ministers an easy life of it. In all social relations, we met with nothing but the most gracious and effusive kindness, which set us entirely at ease and especially won the heart of my wife, and still charmed her when she had learned to allow a little for national manners. Nor did my efforts to organise classes for systematic religious instruction of the young fail of a fair response. But the first approach towards questions of religious politics or doctrinal theology revealed to me the highly-charged and sensitive atmosphere around. A sermon, mildly criticizing the Arian doctrine, lost me the first, and as I thought, the fastest friend I had in the congregation. He withdrew with his family to another place of worship, and wrote an agonized letter of adieu, such as a fallen Lucifer might have received from his most intimate angel. A signature which, with my venerated colleague, I had attached to a petition for Catholic Emancipation, brought down an explosion of wrath from a blustering but not very lucid gentleman, who "had been credibly informed that ministers should not meddle with politics", but who, nevertheless, thought it our duty to sign on the other side. Indeed, the anti-catholic feeling evinced by the principal people in the society startled and shocked me beyond measure. In an endowed school connected with the Meeting House, some 40 orphans were lodged, educated and qualified for apprenticeship; the vacancies being filled up by election in open vestry. The children, it was well known, were brought up as Protestants. At one of the elections, a boy of very winning appearance, brought by a well-mannered father (the mother was dead), excited a prevailing interest in the members present: but it was suggested that no enquiry had been made respecting the parents' religion. The man was recalled and questioned. The mother had been a Protestant. "And you?" said the chairman. "I'll not be desaiiving your honour," replied the father: "the boy may follow his mother's road; but I'm bound to be a Catholic." "Be gone then this minute,"

exclaimed the Chairman, with a loud stamp of his foot upon the floor; "how dare you show your face here? . We have nothing to do with you and yours." On my trying remonstrance, when the vestry resumed, he lifted his spectacles and looked at me transfixed, as a naturalist would look at a live Dodo: and though there were signs of some response to my protest, he had the meeting with him in treating it as an eccentricity and passing on to the "qualified candidates". Yet this Chairman, apart from his Toryism and Protestantism, was a most estimable gentleman; of much benevolence and high honour; courteous and considerate, and in great social request for positions of trust and influence. This vestry incident however cracked the ice of a prejudice which, by repeated blows, was gradually and completely broken up: and, even before my return to England, a totally different temper already prevailed.

The period of my residence in Dublin coincided with the floodtide of O'Connell's agitation; and [?under] the Lord-Lieutenancies of the Marquis of Anglesey and the Duke of Northumberland party passion ran dangerously high. It was a curious experience to pass from the society of the very decorous, loyal, semi-Orange gentlemen of whom I have given a sample, to that of the old patriot and rebel, Hamilton Rowan and his heroic wife; at whose house the conversation, when it turned upon politics, recalled the brilliancy and audacity of the Paris salons in /89. The old man himself, not otherwise particularly impressive, had eyes of a tiger: and when he was in the mood to tell the story of his adventures, they seemed to kindle and perforate you like burning-glasses. His force was not intellectual, but of passion and will: and he was less at home when the presence of Lady Morgan and Lover, who were frequent guests at his table, directed the conversation upon literature, society, and art. Neither the blind conservatism, nor the ideal radicalism of the Irish parties attracted me: and I remained an outside observer of their struggle. It was impossible to follow O'Connell from audience to audience without acknowledging that, in versatility of persuasion and freedom of range, oratory can go no further,

and without crediting each address, as it proceeds, with sincerity. But it was fatal to compare them: and the man, when apprehended as a whole, became a great artist, really sympathizing with each part as he played it, but ready to exchange it for another if needful for some unavowed end foreign to both.

Before accepting ministerial duty in Ireland, I ought to have acquainted myself fully with the relations between the Presbyterians and the State, and considered whether I could make myself a party to them. As however the retiring pastor retained the Regium Donum attached to his office, so long as he lived, the question did not press itself upon my attention, and I ceaselessly passed it by, with a vague feeling, I believe, that nothing depended upon it beyond a little more or less of ultimate salary. Before 4 years had expired, Mr. Taylor's death, devolving the grant upon me, brought the problem up for solution. Whether the theoretical objections which I then felt to any organic connection between Church and State would alone have been decisive, I cannot tell. But, during my residence in Ireland, the gross injustice involved in the relative position of the Catholic Church and the two chief Protestant bodies had become so oppressive to me that the very idea of being personally participant in it affected me with shame. In a letter to my congregation I explained why I could not accept my succession to the Regium Donum, and expressed my willingness to dispense with the addition it would make to my salary; or, should this concession to a personal scruple risk a permanent forfeiture for which they were not prepared, to place early in their hands the resignation of my office. The letter immediately divided the conformist from the non-conformist elements in the society, - or rather, revealed the unsuspected existence of the latter. But at a meeting hurriedly convened a majority was obtained for a Resolution, abruptly accepting my resignation as if it had been already tendered. This harsh termination of my first pastoral engagement I soon forgot in the compensating affection and generosity of the large minority, and of a numerous body that watched the struggle of principle with sympathetic

interest from the outside.

The crisis however was a serious one in my affairs. It broke up my establishment of College students; to perfect which I had expended large sums upon my house: and it compelled me to sell the house in a fallen market, and ask indulgence of time from the friend who had enabled me to make the purchase. I had disqualified myself for re-settlement among the Irish Presbyterians: and through my residence on the west side of the Channel I was unknown in England. A proposal was pressed upon me to establish in Dublin a congregation independent of all ecclesiastical connection, and so free to exemplify the true principles of union for promotion of the Christian life. But the first elements of such a society would have been drawn from the Church which I was leaving: and I declined to impair the unity and practical efficiency of congregations which had the prestige of a venerable history, and the conditions of reformed action in the future. Mr. N. J. Fox, who had visited me in Dublin and christened my eldest son Russell (after the respected author of the Reform Bill), would have committed to my hands the organization and conduct of the Domestic Mission in London, then projected though not commenced: but I was conscious of no adequate store of resource and hopefulness for such a work. The suspense ended by my becoming colleague of Rev. John Grundy in charge of the congregation of Protestant Dissenters meeting in Paradise St. Chapel, Liverpool. In the summer of 1832, we vacated our first home, went the round of farewell visits to the friends who had brightened it by their affection, stood in silence together in the French Churchyard by a little grave which bears the name of our first-born, and then crossed the sea, with a son and daughter, to enter upon our second and longest term of unbroken service. One precious link there was which prevented the breach with Dublin life from being absolute. The dear friend, with her two sons, who had passed with us from Bristol to Dublin, now took a house near us in Liverpool, her younger son entering a solicitors' office for his legal training; and the elder prosecuting those scientific and literary studies

which have made him one of the most accomplished of living men. In spite of great losses by removal, I managed before long to discharge my debt to her, and with it the last lingering anxiety of the Dublin crisis.

While it was necessary to supplement my stipend by some private earnings, I resolved not again to venture upon a large house, bound to pay its own expenses. Contenting myself with the smallest possible, I proposed to give private lessons to young persons past the school age and needing guidance in their ulterior self-culture. The proposal seemed to meet a real want; the numbers in my classes were adequate and steady: and while they relieved me from anxiety, I found in them a delightful source of intellectual sympathy with a succession of thoughtful young persons, and a salutary incentive for myself to preserve my mental stores from rusting and enlarge them by fresh accessions. And the relation between teacher and taught, in matters apart from theology, far from clashing with pastoral duty, so harmonised with it as to be its best support. Occasionally, I was tempted still further from the field of professional action. The Liv<sup>1</sup>. Mechanics' Institution being in need of voluntary help, I undertook, with more courage than prudence, to deliver a course of Public Lectures on Experimental Chemistry, and soon after another, on Physical Astronomy. They led to the formation of classes for mutual instruction, some of whose members attained distinction, as men of science and inventors. Other claims upon my time, however, soon compelled me to withdraw from this kind of work. In consequence of some papers written for Mr. Fox's "Monthly Repository", I was asked, on the establishment of the London Review, to enroll myself on its literary staff: and thus was commenced a habit of Review writing which, when kept in due subordination, I have found conducive to vigilance and exactitude in study, and which best disposed of all spare time.

The retirement of my excellent colleague in 1837, I think, rendered my position at once more stable and more responsible. There had been no more difference between us than is almost inevitable between two successive

generations: and he had never availed himself of his authority as Senior to put the slightest check upon my plans. But, out of personal deference to modes of thought other than my own, I had put a check upon myself, and suppressed many a natural word and wish of which I could foresee his disapproval. The undivided office left me now without excuse, if I failed to shape my work into a form considered and complete. Complete it certainly never became. Consistent its various parts, I believe, really were at any one time: but, on comparing separated times, contrarieties undoubtedly appear; nor did my ways of thinking and teaching at any period undergo more serious change, than during the first few years of my sole ministry. I can hardly say now what were the successive steps which removed me more and more from the school of philosophical opinion in which I had been trained. In my fondness for physical science I had accepted its fundamental conceptions and maxims as ultimate, and been unconscious of the metaphysical problems that lay beyond. In this state of mind it was inevitable that the Necessarian doctrine should appear to have demonstrative certainty: for it is little more than a bare expression of the postulates in natural science, and hardly requires a single remove from its definitions. But in the very process of expounding and applying it, I not only became aware of the distortion which it gave to the whole group of moral conceptions, but began to see that in Causation there was something behind the phenomenal sequence traced by inductive observation: and gradually, the scheme which I had taken as a universal formula shrank within limits that did not include the Conscience of man or the Moral Government of God. Along with this discovery of a metaphysical realm beyond the physical, came a new attitude of mind towards the early Christian modes of conception, especially those of the Apostle Paul; whose writings seemed to be totally transformed, and to open up veins of thought of which I had previously no glimpse. From some lectures published in 1839, in connection with a controversy in Liverpool, it is evident that this turn in the tide had then fully set in. But its



currents first found their determinate channels when, in consequence of my appointment (in 1840) to a department in M.N.C., I resumed the systematic study of philosophical literature, and thought out anew the problems which I had to treat. The change of view was very inconvenient to me. Almost everything I had written became worthless in my eyes: courses of lectures elaborately prepared for repeated use were laid upon the shelf for ever: the familiar text-books could no longer be used in that capacity in my private classes: and every subject had to be melted down again in my own mind, and be recast in other moulds. For all this however there was ample compensation, in the sense of inward deliverance which I seemed to gain from artificial system into natural speech. It was an escape from a logical cage into the open air. I breathed more freely. The horizon enlarged: I could mingle with the world, and believe in what I saw and felt, without refracting it through a glass which construed it into something else. I could use the language of men, - of their love and hate, of remorse and resolve, of repentance and prayer, - in its simplicity, without any "subauditur" which neutralises its sense. Had I found what was nearer to the truth? or only, what was more congenial to my nature? I cannot presume to say. I only know that, till I emerged from the necessarian theory, no fresh fountain seemed ever opened within me.

With the exception of the "Liv<sup>1</sup>. Controversy" (on which I need not pause), nothing occurred to vary the uniformity of a Nonconformist Minister's life till, on the removal of York College to Manchester in 1840, I was made responsible for the department of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Logic. The arrangement required me to go over from Liv<sup>1</sup>. two days in the week; and it was only by the most rigorous economy of time that the intervals sufficed for the preparation of my lectures, in addition to the Sunday services. Habitual private teaching however had furnished me with resources which helped me through the first session: and, after that, the 3 months' vacation was used to set me forward with the work of the next. I never attempted to produce more than one sermon in the week; and at times of

pressure was too often content with rewriting or revising one which was already in the drawer. The disadvantages under which my first course of Mental Philosophy was produced prevented me from being long satisfied with it. It aimed at combining the analyses of the English empirical school with the critical idealism of Kant: but, except in particular parts, the relations between them were not properly worked out. After a few years, when my reading had been enlarged, especially by the study of Hegel, another course was substituted, prepared on a different plan. And subsequently, this also was set aside in favour of a third (still incomplete) having more the character of independent construction, and less of critical commentary upon doctrines. The field of Moral Philosophy was treated with a similar series of crops. I began with simply annotating Butler and Paley, - the text-books prescribed by the University of London. Lecturing afterwards to a Class of Graduates, I quitted this narrow ground, and wrote a more advanced course, blending historical with systematic method. Becoming dissatisfied with mere revision and enlargement of these lectures, and fancying that I saw further into my subject, I began again, and cast it into a form which excluded from use all the former materials. Though my discontent with my earlier work was well-founded, I now think it would have been better if, instead of indulging it, I had persisted in writing out my subjects, however imperfectly, to their close. As it is, neither course is complete; and life is now too far advanced to afford reasonable hope of executing the remainder of my schemes, though the additions of each year continue undiminished. Logic I have always taught from text-books, interrupted by special excursus on topics of difficulty; and I have resorted to a variety of guides, - Whateley, Thomson, Hamilton, Trendelenburg, Mill, Mansel, Bain; deeming it important that the student, by familiarity with several nomenclatures, should learn to break-up and re-form his thoughts, so as not to become the slave of any one set of abstractions. With considerable surprise I have found that, as a discipline in precision and flexibility, no study is more serviceable than that of Aristotle himself. These several courses prepared

the way for an investigation of the philosophical grounds and problems of Religion. At first, it seemed sufficient to annex this investigation as an appendix to the theory of Ethics, and treat the spiritual relations of man as essentially the moral in their transcendent form. But with the rise of new conceptions of Force, and the growth of Agnostic doctrines, and the extension of Law to the evolution of species, a revision became necessary of the older representation of Divine Agency, and a reconsideration of the ultimate principles of human knowledge. To provide adequately for the critical discussion of this new, or rather revived, class of subjects, I discarded the compendious course which had met the wants of earlier years, and replaced it by a fresh and substantive treatment of the whole theme of Religion, in its physical and metaphysical, as well as its ethical aspects. This task still occupies me: and I mention it here, only in order to compress into one notice the internal history of my college work.

During 6 years' tenancy of our first house (in Mount St.), 3 children were born to us; 2 daughters, and between them, a son; whose name, Herbert, recalls to me (among other tender memories) the voice that gave it him -  
1835 that of Blanco White. Mr. White lived at no great distance. He was pleased with the idea of a simple service of Dedication at the parents' house; and, though withdrawn from all public duty, readily consented, in expression of private friendship, to join in our thanksgiving and leave with us his benediction. In 1838 we moved to a larger house, in Mason St., Edgehill, next door to Dr. Raffles, who was always a pleasant neighbour. In the same terrace lived Rev. Mr. Hull, the liberal incumbent of the Church for the Blind. The street for the most part belonged to an eccentric old man, who picked his tenants by unaccountable whims of fancy. On my applying for the house, he kept me in suspense while he catechized me in the drollest way to find out who I was: at last, he said, "Yes, Sir, you shall have it; and then, with the Rev. Mr. Hull, the Rev. Dr. Raffles, and the Rev. Mr.M.,  
1838- it will be strange if we have not a Trinity that will keep the Devil out  
1845 of the Street." On the credit of this function I remained there 7 years;

and there my youngest son and daughter were born. In 1843-4, the benevolent and public-spirited Mr. Richard Yates having projected the present Prince's Park and, on the refusal of Corporation to take the responsibility, purchased the land himself, I was tempted to select a plot and build myself a house. The planning and progress of the scheme was a constant source of interest and amusement in the family for upwards of a year; especially as the rapid slope of the ground involved a terrace-garden, and a story more behind than before, and a mysterious tunnel-passage from the back-door, and other first-rate provisions for "hide-and-seek". Hither we removed in 1845: and though the increased distance from town was sometimes inconvenient, - the ampler space, - the perfect quiet, the pure air, the outlook on grass and foliage and flowers, and the vicinity of some of our best friends, especially the good sisters Yates of Farmfield, far outweighed in benefit the added tax upon time and exertion.

But on the brightness of that new home a shadow soon began to steal. Our boy Herbert, - a child so delicately made and of such rare beauty that we had often wondered at his habitual good health, - was this year visited by some internal complaint which long remained mysterious, but at last declared itself to be fatal. We had barely realized what was before us, ere he was seized in the night of the 28th March 1846, with a sudden paroxysm, and died in my arms. I will not dwell upon the fair promise which in that moment withered for this world: I should be supposed to speak under the idealizing influence of time. Yet all who knew him were struck and fascinated, not only by his personal grace, but by his quick intelligence, his transparent undulations of feeling, above all, his intuitive apprehension of beauty and expression in form, colour, tone, and character. A remarkable evidence of the impression which his winning nature produced was afforded by an incident in the life of the late Dr. Philip J. Carpenter. This exemplary man, when stationed at Warrington, coming pretty often to my house to the delight of all my children, became deeply attached to the boy: and the tender reverence with which, in after years, he always spoke of him was very touching. From a scruple of their father's, none of Dr. Lant Carpenter's

children had been baptised. Philip, not inheriting this scruple, resolved to submit himself to the rite in middle life: and he availed himself of the opportunity to assume the name Herbert as a prefix to that by which he was known; and adopted thenceforth a monogram embodying the initials of the three Christian names. This feeling in an occasional visitor may serve as some measure of the sorrow at home. A memorial stone marks the grave under the trees in the little Park Chapel ground.

The rapid growth of Liv<sup>1</sup>., removing the residences of its inhabitants further and further from the neighbourhood of the Exchange, had long rendered Paradise St. Chapel inconvenient to its congregation: and in 1847 a Resolution was taken to remove to Hope St. During the building of the Church which now adorns that site, I was indulged with a much-needed leave of absence, granted for a year and extended to 15 months. More even than of recruited strength did I feel the want of enlarged study for my Academic work: and, recognising the reasonableness of this feeling, the College also consented to dispense with my services for a session. My plan was, to take the winter semester at Berlin; to prepare for it by some months' discipline in the language at Dresden; and to follow it up by successive residences in selected parts of Germany, long enough to allow of regular occupation, yet sufficiently varied to bring into view the main centres of interest in the country. Crossing with my family from Hull to Hamburgh in July 1848, I proceeded by Brunswick to Dresden; and, establishing the household in a suite of rooms in the Waisenhaus Strasse, at once engaged masters and organised a regular scheme of life. The daily industry was relieved by all sorts of pleasant variations and interruptions; most frequently by visits to the Gallery and the Theatre (the Kapelle being under the direction of Reissiger and Wagner); occasionally by such excursions as the fine autumn weather invited, - now to the Plauensche Grund, and then to General Miltiz's at Meissen. Especially did we spend, under the guidance of our honoured friend, Dr. Krause, and in company with Miss Harriet Mill, and Mrs. Alexander Allen, and two English students, some delightful days in the

Saxon Switzerland. The young men, Mr. John Tayler and Mr. Leyson Lewis, my son and I quitting the party at Hirniskretschen, struck across Lausitz to Reichenbach; whence, unfortunately Mr. Lewis was obliged, by a slight attack of illness, to return at once to Dresden. The rest of us, entering the forest and taking the Bohemian glass-works on the way, worked up the Western slopes of the Riesengebirge, and along their ridge, with one foot, as it were, in Bohemia and the other in Silesia, till we reached the summit at the Schneekoppe. In spite of copious rain in the day, and fresh snow at night, the walk was magnificent; and its hardships added zest to its enjoyment. Stopping midway, drenched to the skin, at a little hospice in the mountains, we were persuaded to strip and hang up our clothes by the stoves to dry. The difficulty was, how meanwhile to dispose of our own persons, especially as we were ravenous, and had no idea of going to bed. But with a blanket and skewer apiece we got under cover, and sat, like a party of wild Indians, doing eager justice to the best Weinsuppe and Forellen. I believe that a sketch of the scene, from the humourous pencil of our lost companion, still exists. But I must not indulge in these crowding recollections. The weather clearing, we descended, after exhausting the glories of the summit, on the picturesque Bohemian side, and made our way to Prague. That striking and interesting city bore at that time fresh traces of the insurrection recently suppressed: broken sculptures, balls embedded in the masonry of buildings, and the drawing-room window behind the curtain of which the General's wife was killed by a street shot, were pointed out to us: and an intense excitement, it was evident, still prevailed throughout the place. Returning by the Elbe to Dresden, we were relieved to find our invalided companion already convalescent.

The Archduke John having been appointed Reichsverweser by the Frankfort Assembly, the troops of the different German States were required to take the oath of allegiance to him. This ceremony, impressive in its exterior, but reluctantly performed by King, Princes, and soldiers, we witnessed at Dresden. That it so soon lost its meaning marks the restlessness, at once

ineffectual and dangerous, of that revolutionary year. When the time approached for our removal to Berlin, I took the precaution of writing for advice to the eminent Pastor Sydow, to whom I had letter of introduction. My fear that political agitation might make the capital of Prussia not the most eligible place for a winter of study, was confirmed by him: he dissuaded me from coming. Receiving however opposite counsel at the same time, I listened, by natural preference, to the opinion which fell in with all my arrangements; and, at the end of October, established my household in Berlin. Scarcely had we organized our habits and occupations there, and begun (my son Russell and I) our attendance at the University, when a domestic anxiety set in which made us little sensible of the prevailing political alarms. Our eldest daughter was prostrated with nervous fever, the issue of which trembled for weeks between life and death; the danger being enhanced by brutal behaviour on the part of our landlord and his wife, which drove us from his house in the middle of the illness. At last, when she had been 3 weeks without closing her eyes and hope was almost gone, an experiment was tried which it terrified me to administer. After lifting her into a hot medicated bath, I poured according to my instructions an ice-cold douche from a considerable height on the crown of her head. The shock was severe and alarming: but, on being replaced in bed, she fell asleep: and from that time the constant strain was exchanged for alternations of repose with excitement gradually declining. It needed however all our five months' stay to restore her strength for our further journey.

During the whole of this time, especially its earlier, the struggle between the Court and the Revolution was passing through its most portentous phases. Berlin, when we arrived there, was under the protection of the National Guard, and at every public office might be seen a citizen in plain clothes, pacing to and fro with his Zündnadelgewehr on his shoulder: a promise having been extorted from the King that the soldiers should vacate the city and be kept at a distance from it. A Constitution was octroyirt, - a copy of which I bought in the street on the day of its issue and care-

fully studied. But scarcely was I master of my lesson, before it was recalled and replaced by another. A National Assembly was sitting in the Schauspielplatz, the left wing of which was led by an architect of the appropriate name of Unruh; and the discussions of which, though copious in patriotic eloquence, were concentrated upon no practicable objects. When Vienna was in revolution and invested by Windischgrätz for its suppression, a Resolution was brought forward in the Berlin Assembly, insisting that Prussian troops should be dispatched to raise the siege and give ascendancy to the insurgents. To secure the passing of this Resolution, terrorism was applied to the members by the mob in the vestibule and around the house of the Assembly: and, in fear of their lives, some of the more obnoxious had to escape from the city. This was the turning point of the political drama. The King, changing his ministry, adopted two decisive measures. Declaring it proved that freedom of debate was impossible in presence of the Berlin populace, he adjourned the Assembly and summoned it to Brandenburg. And seeing that the National Guard had shown itself incompetent to protect the peace of the City and the liberty of parliament, he considered himself released from his engagement to dispense with the presence of the troops, and announced their return in a specified time. That time was adroitly anticipated: and as I was entering the Thiergarten on the previous day, I was turned back by the advance of immense bodies of infantry and cavalry, preceded by artillery ready for action. They secured the arsenal; they surrounded the Schauspielplatz, planting cannon at each corner: they mounted guard at the Palace and all the public places, without however dislodging the citizen sentinels already in duty there, or taking any notice of them. Next came a proclamation, dissolving the National Guard and requiring the delivery of their arms. In conformity with a Resolution of the Officers, obedience was refused. To enforce it, the city was divided into sections; and small military parties were told off, to visit and, if necessary, search every house for the unsundered arms. No one expected that all this would pass off without conflict. The English Embassy, thinking seriously of the crisis, granted me an extra passport, in case



flight should become necessary and the original one be irrecoverable from the Office of Police. And few persons who could help it ventured into the streets. There was a refractory portion of the Assembly which, denying the legality of the royal order, and refusing to go to Brandenburg, continued to meet in spite of frequent dispersion by force: and so long as this body held together, a nucleus existed which might at any time rally the revolutionary elements. But the vigilant promptitude of the government, the patience and good humour of the soldiers, together with the fortunate weakness of the democratic leaders, carried the reaction through without a barricade or a shot. The aspect of the city speedily changed. Carriages re-appeared in the streets. Social visiting was resumed. Places of public amusement recovered their attractions. And the political tension, though still overstrained, permitted other interests to play their part again in life.

A short experience convinced me - that, for the purpose of my special studies, I should gain most by reading a good deal and hearing a little. I closely attended Trendelenburg's two courses, - of Logic, and of the History of Philosophy, - writing out my notes, with all the citations, in the evenings. Beyond the references which these lectures included, I read only two authors, - Plato, and Hegel, - having greatly felt my need of a better insight into both. Curiosity indeed, or personal admiration, tempted me, now and then, into the lecture-rooms of Gabler, Michelet, Vatke, Aeander, Boeckh, Ranke: but from these fascinating excursions into remoter fields I returned only more persuaded of the need of concentration on my own selected objects. For a long time I found myself baffled by the difficulties of Hegel; nor did I gain any help from either the expository logic of Gabler or rhetoric of Michelet. Often, - let me confess it, - I struggled for days with a page or two of the Encyklopädie, and tried and rejected several keys of interpretation, before the real bearings of the passage revealed themselves to me. Indirectly, I was much aided by consulting his writings in the order of their production, and also by following his

method in its application to history. The light thus thrown forward from the growth and backward from the results of his Logical Process is the only effective commentary upon its systematic construction. Though Hegel produced in me no conviction, but rather threw me back upon the position of Kant, yet the study of him affords, I think, a discipline of great value; disenchanting many beguiling abstractions, and accustoming the mind to unmask the forms and processes of thought, whether in itself or in the movements of history.

In virtue of some affinity between the ancient Greek & the modern German modes of thought (depending, I believe, on a Pantheistic conception of the world common to both), I was astonished by the reciprocal lights that passed between them when they were studied together. Phrases and doctrines in each which no English exposition had rendered intelligible cleared themselves at once when represented in terms of the other; so that I constantly seemed to make two discoveries in one act. No doubt, this is an experience which, with proper reading, might have been made at home. But when you are steeped in the influence of a foreign language, it forces you to take the tincture of its characteristics.

The long anxiety of illness at home, and the troubled political weather abroad, restricted our social experiences in Berlin. But it would be ungrateful not to record the friendly intercourse which we were privileged to enjoy with Dr. & Mrs. Pertz, Professor and Mrs. Ranke, Prof<sup>r</sup> Trendelenburg and his family, Mr. and Mrs. Solly, Dr. and Mrs. Zumpt, and Prof<sup>r</sup> and Mrs. Passow, who so far honoured us with their confidence, as to entrust their eldest daughter to us, for a year's visit to England on our return. From among my son's friends also, and some former pupils of my own, - chiefly our Riesengebirge party, with Mr. Charles Beard, and Mr. Rich<sup>d</sup> Holt Hutton, who was under the same roof and daily dined with us, we had a bright little inner circle around us, whose constant flow of kindly humour kept the outward clouds away, or touched them with some happy glow.

Moving southward at the beginning of April, by Nürnberg, Bamberg, to Munich, and spending a week at each place of chief interest, we passed into the region of the "Bavarian Alps"; settling ourselves for 6 weeks in a secularized monastery at St. Teno (near Reichenhall), till the snow should be sufficiently gone to open Berchtesgaden to us for the same length of time. The brilliant birth of the Spring and the exuberant youth of the Summer, as we pursued the year up the mountains, left an ineffaceable impression upon us all: nor did I ever expect, beyond the limits of Switzerland, to see the majestic and lovely elements of Alpine beauty so perfectly combined as they are in the country of the Königssee. Akin to it, yet inferior, is the interest of the Salzkammergut which we next visited on our way to Passau. Taking there a private boat we floated down the Danube, through solemn forests and between ever-varying heights, to Linz; and then completed the journey to Vienna by steamer. No sooner had we landed than we found that the world was not as tranquil as it looked from our mountain retreats. On asking the landlord of the Römischer Kaiser whether he could receive us, he laughed and said that we might have the choice of all the rooms in all the hotels of the City. It was for Austria the most fearful hour of the Hungarian struggle. St. Stephen's tower was in military occupation, to keep perpetual outlook towards Pesth. The gaiety of Vienna was suspended. Strangers avoided, and even citizens deserted the place; and we were reminded on all hands that we were paying a hazardous visit. The calculation of time and probabilities, however, on which the venture had been made, was justified by the result. After successfully spending the allotted number of days and seeing all that we had proposed, we safely changed our quarters to the northern base of the Schneekoppe at Warmbrunn in Silesia, where we intended to remain for the last 6 weeks of our continental absence. Wooded hills and picturesque villages, rising out of a sea of waving corn, constitute a cheerful landscape around that pleasant watering-place. The drawback is, or was, the painful poverty of the peasantry. With their farm industry they had combined the handloom linen weaving; and were

suffering the wearisome process of inevitable defeat in the competition with machinery. The visible distress long haunted me: and, still more, the local indifference to its existence, and inattention to its cause.

The new Church at Liverpool not being finished at the promised date, I availed myself of my extended leave of absence to stay some time at Heidelberg, reaching it by way of Eisenach, Fulda and Frankfort, and so passing over the recent battle-field of the Baden insurrection. Heidelberg was in occupation of the Prussian troops; and soldiers were quartered in the rooms above our own. Unwelcome at first, they recommended themselves (we were assured) to the favour of the inhabitants by their steadiness and good temper, and helped considerably to weaken the South German popular prejudice against the Prussians. A fortnight, diligently spent in exploring the delightful country of the Neckar, completed our term. We turned our faces homewards; and, pausing only at Bonn to visit some old friends, we hastened to Liverpool by Antwerp and Hull, and were again in Park Nook at the end of September.

Among the welcoming friends that thronged around us, we missed one whose greeting would have been the first and tenderest, but whose parting kiss, I believe, had been given the year before with a secret surmise that it would be the last. My mother had died during our absence. After long residence near us and my sisters' houses in Liverpool, she had removed to my brother Robert's in Birmingham, where, years before, she had undergone a fruitless operation for the restoration of sight, and where she was secure of the gentlest and most faithful care. Her many years of blindness she had borne with a patience little to be expected from a person of so much energy; yet without losing her activity of mind or contracting her circle of sympathies. She became conscious of failing strength before any marked decline was visible to others. Almost her last considerable act was one of the most delicate and fastidious honour, involving resolute and protracted self-denial, and touchingly expressive of her depth of affection and supreme sense of right.

Early in October, 1849, the new Church in Hope St., Liverpool, was opened, and with freshened heart, I resumed my duties both ministerial and academical. No revolution however had been wrought in me by the year of absence: and the new materials of thought and feeling which had accumulated, silently flowed into the same channels of method which previous experience had traced. For eight years more I preached and lectured under conditions little varied. If there was any marked change, it was that I paid more assiduous attention to the instruction of the younger members of my congregation in theological and historical knowledge. Finding, for instance, that very confused ideas prevailed respecting the Communion Service, I thought it desirable to give a nine months' course of weekly evening lectures on the History of the Eucharist, its inner doctrine and its outer forms; and, at the end, to clear its permanent significance from all foreign accretions, and invite those of my hearers to whom that significance was dear to meet me for a short office of self-dedication (tantamount to Confirmation) prior to the next Communion. To avoid interference with the Sunday classes and services, these lectures were given on a weekday.

The later years of my College engagement at Manchester were deprived of one charm which had rendered the earlier ones memorable to me. Francis William Newman, who had been one of our professorial staff from the first, had removed to University College, London; and his departure withdrew, not only from our Classrooms their most brilliant light, but from us his colleagues, especially from Mr. Tayler and myself, - a personal friend from whom we had contracted a deep and even veneration. Though the change of religious opinion which was then going on in his mind was silently wrought out in his own study, and was not even known to us in its progress; yet it latently carried in it many sources of sympathy and lines of mental approach, which, however little marked at the time, made themselves felt. When the extent of his change was avowed, it seemed to fix his theological position at a serious distance from ours, and to call, in some of its relations, for critical resistance, or at least some statement

of the grounds of dissent. But the passages of controversy that took place between us in no way affected our friendship; the harmony of our sentiment and judgment being in truth vastly deeper than the difference. Even in regard to the most sensitive point for a Christian disciple - the estimate of the character of Jesus, - it was obvious that the variance was one, not of moral feeling, but of historical interpretation. The temper condemned by Mr. Newman was not that to which I gave my reverence; nor should I, had it stood before me, have directed on it any other sentiment than his. It was simply that we put a different construction on the biographical memorials preserved in the Gospels; or else, that he continued to receive as historically true parts of those memorials which appeared and still appear to me fictitious accretions from the apostolic or post-apostolic age. The ideal life, of filial communion with God, & trustful surrender to his righteous & loving will, remained the same to both; to him, a glorious possibility in the present & the future; to me, not without also representative in the past. If I cling to the historical element in Religion, it is because it embodies for me in concrete form the spiritually true and perfect. If he dispenses with it, it is to set free Divine and eternal relations from the accidents of time, the imperfections of men, and the uncertainties of tradition. In spite therefore of our position on opposite sides of the Christian name, the real affinity of thought could not fail to make itself felt. To his vigilant activity of mind, his readiness to start new questions, his fertility of suggestion, his self-forgetful courage in assailing questionable prejudices and habits, I am deeply grateful for many an awakening from my own more conservative tendency, opening my eyes to social errors & wrongs which I might not have noticed, and exhibiting remedies which at least demanded a careful estimate.

Mr. Newman's Classical Professorship in Manchester marks the time when the College made its final effort to supply a complete system of University culture to the students resorting to it, and to serve the wants alike of laymen and divines. The classes however were but scantily

attended; and in a few years it became impossible to sustain the number of departments with which it had opened. A proposal was consequently revived, which had already been favoured by a minority at the time of the removal from York, - to cut down the institution to the scale of a Theological School, and to plant it in the neighbourhood of some large College where its alumni might obtain their literary and scientific training. This proposal did not any longer necessarily involve a change of place: for, in 1851, the Owens' College was opened in Manchester, and offered, with greater economy, all that was professed by the non-theological staff of our smaller institution. There was again therefore an alternative to be decided, among those who agreed that the College must become a satellite; - Manchester? or London? The vote was naturally given for University College, which had been long enough in operation to win public confidence and had educated a considerable number of the Trustees themselves. Accordingly in 1853, M.N.C. became a tenant in University Hall, Gordon Square, London, under two Professors, Rev. J. J. Tayler, the Principal, and Rev. G. Vance Smith; with whom, by a special arrangement, I was soon associated, as Lecturer in Philosophy. As this was only a half-department and I was not prepared to quite my post in Liverpool, my weekly journeys were simply extended from Manchester to London; my classes being all brought together on to the two days which I devoted to them. This laborious plan remained unaltered till 1857; when, fresh adjustments being required, a claim upon me was made for a larger responsibility in the management of the College; and, taking leave of my ministry in Liverpool, I removed to London, and gave myself up exclusively to my Academical duties, in happy association with my friend, Mr. Tayler, and my son Russell in the Hebrew department.

Without stirring the embers of extinct or dying controversial fires, I may mention, as an expressive characteristic of the time, that this larger trust was not committed to me without strenuous resistance. The appointment rested with the College Comm<sup>ee</sup>. After it had been quietly completed, and I had resigned my congregational charge, and sold my house

in the Prince's Park, I was served with a formidable Protest against the appointment, signed by a large number of respected and more or less influential persons. The plea which they urged was mainly theological:

- that Mr. Tayler and I both belonged to the same modern school of religious thought and historical criticism; and that, in deference to the opinions of many of the Trustees, one chair should have been reserved for a representative of the older theology. Among the signatories of this document were many of my expected neighbours and oldest friends in London; so that it opened to me the painful prospect of planting my home where I was unwelcome, and of doing my work under the eye of a censorship far from impartial.

Deeming it essential to test the real strength of the opposition, I begged the Comm<sup>ee</sup> to convene a Special Meeting of the Trustees and take the sense of the constituency on the recent proceedings. The appeal resulting in a Resolution of approval, carried by a majority of about 7 to 1, I was enabled to dismiss the fear that I was entering on a false position, and to trust to time to wear away the misgivings of the Protesters. Their confidence and good will gradually returned: and even their extreme representative who, in the heat of discussion, had been betrayed into personal accusations of selfish intrigue, lived to retract them, and to resume the friendly relations of earlier years. Some colour was given to unfavourable suspicions by the simultaneous engagement of my son with myself: and cynical observers could not be expected to believe that the two appointments were independent of each other. Yet so it was. I had strongly recommended another scholar for the Hebrew Lectureship. And it was Prof<sup>r</sup> Ewald who, when consulted by Mr. Tayler, spontaneously mentioned Russell as at once the fittest and most accessible person he could suggest. It would have been a contemptible slavery to appearances, had I interposed to prevent this commendation from producing its legitimate effect. The new arrangements, once left to the test of experience, worked in a most satisfactory way: nor in the history of the College can I think of any period marked by more harmonious and effective industry, or animated by a higher spirit, than the remaining years of Mr. Tayler's life.



From the time when the "Philosophical Radicals" founded the London Review I had never wholly relinquished writing for periodicals. In 1848, I was induced, by the companionship of my three friends, Mess<sup>rs</sup> Tayler, Thom and Wicksteed, to share in a more responsible work, - that of establishing and editing the "Prospective Review", - as successor, with larger aims, to the "Christian Teacher", long conducted by Mr. Thom single-handed. From the known opinions of the Editors, this Review has often been regarded as an organ of the Unitarians, notwithstanding its own disclaimer, at the outset, of any such character. In one sense, - and that a most important one, - its aim might be more correctly described as anti-Unitarian: for, the great object of its conductors was to prevent the course of liberal theology from slipping into the rut of any Unitarian or other sect, and to treat its whole contents and all cognate topics with philosophical & historical impartiality, apart from all ecclesiastical or party interests. And, in point of fact, this breadth of purpose, while securing it some circulation and marked respect among studious persons in various connections, caused it to be coldly looked upon by the very people it was supposed to represent. This relative incidence of public favour led to proposals, in 1853-4, to merge it in the Westminster Review, which included much of the same ground; but, instead of this, to the expansion of the "Prospective" into the "National Review", - a separate large Quarterly, embracing the field of Literature and Politics, in addition to the scope of its predecessor. This move was preferred, because the tone of the Westminster was becoming more and more uncongenial with the philosophical and religious convictions of the Editors of the Prospective, and they could not, with satisfaction, surrender their function, and transfer their own literary work, into hands that often indeed gave valuable help to their main objects, but often also visited them with slight or injury.

At one moment indeed a possibility seemed to present itself of an amalgamation of the two periodicals. In the autumn of 1854, the proprietor & publisher of the Westminster became insolvent, and the Review, - the most important of his assets, - passed, with the rest of the estate, to

the disposal of the creditors. Had it come into the market, and its value been tested by the offer of sale, a bid for it would have been made by the proprietors of the "Prospective", with tolerable certainty of a considerable increase to the dividend. With other of the creditors, I was of opinion that this regular course ought to be followed. Receiving however no notice till the 3rd of August, of the creditors' meeting at 11 A.M. on the following day, we, who lived from 200 to 400 miles off, had no opportunity of taking part in the proceedings. A balance sheet was laid before the local attendants, from which the Westminster Review was omitted: and, to induce the the creditors to forego all claim upon it and leave it in the publisher's hands, a personal guarantee was offered of a definite composition by a friend whose security was perfect. The meeting closed with this proposal: but we absentees, disapproving of the management which had been resorted to, declined to accept the composition, unless a second meeting were called at which a vote should be taken after complete valuation of the assets. Instead of conceding this reasonable demand, the publisher's wealthy patron set himself to buy off the dissentients by payment in full, of their claim on the estate. I refused to listen to such proposals: but I was left alone: and, as my debt did not warrant me in taking more than a secondary part, I gave no further expression to my dissent than by declining to accept any share in the composition, when it came to be distributed. Some years after, when the insolvent pressed for my signature to his discharge, I qualified myself for duly giving it, by receiving in exchange his surrender of the Copyright of articles which I had contributed to the Review during his proprietorship. On this simple story various fictions were grafted at the time; were it not that they are still reproduced, the transactions would not be worth recording. They explain however the mode of transition from the Prospective to the National Review.

Before I take leave of the Prospective, I ought perhaps to advert to one article in it which, from its sad consequences, forms an epoch in my life. I refer to the review, in May 1851, of my sister Harriet's and Mr.

Atkinson's "Letters on Man's Nature & Development". In the close affection which had united us as sister and brother for so many years, sympathy in religious sentiment had always borne a large part. It began with my turn to the ministry and gained strength through my College period; the studies, thoughts, and aspirations of which supplied the chief materials of our intercourse in the correspondence of the session and the outpourings of the vacation. Her first publications were devotional and theological: and the tales which succeeded them were tinged throughout with the same convictions and softened by the same light. Prior to the birth of this element in us both, we had not, as girl and boy, drawn together in any special companionship: for we naturally cared for different things, and were educated on different lines. How completely she herself recognised this sacred ground of the relation between us is apparent through all her correspondence. Her enthusiasm and generosity made her constantly urge me to literary work in partnership or parallelism with her; so that we should divide between us the proposals which editors poured in upon her, and of which, she thought, some might be handed over to me. When pressed and strongly tempted to help Lord Brougham in his reconstruction of Natural Biology, but preoccupied with her Poor Law Tales, she said to me, "Let me but have something of yours to lay my finger upon against I see the Chancellor, and we will be side by side, as we have ever been. You shall battle with Atheism (as Lord Brougham wants me to do), while I fight the Poor Laws. O how glorious!"

That the fulfilment of this prophecy should place me, not side by side with her, but face to face with a book that bears her name, could not fail to sadden at least, if not to shake, a friendship of such foundation. Does it mend the case to say that the book is not atheistic, in as much as it does not deny a "First Cause"? It maintains, at all events, precisely the positions with which, so designated I was invited to "battle". And as to the verbal question, "Atheism" has always been understood to mean, not the denial of a "First Cause"  $\alpha\pi\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta$ , but the denial that the "First Cause"

is God, i.e. an Intending and Governing Mind: nor can we depart from this usage without the absurd result of treating Büchner and those who find their "First Cause" in "Matter & Force" as Theists. How then did this book really affect me? Did it alienate or embitter me? Did it make further intercourse, and quiet discussion of the very questions at issue, impossible? Did it blind me to my sister's eminent gifts and nobleness in life & character, or alter in the least the tone in which I habitually spoke of her? I distinctly deny it. It simply mingled an element of sorrow with my affection, - of inevitable regret that from its resources there had fallen away a large class of common admiration and the whole force of a concurrent reverence. For this loss there would have been some alleviation, had the process which led to it commanded much intellectual respect. But, to my amazement, her convictions had yielded to the most incompetent arguments, without any apparent resistance to the pretentious dogmatism, with which they were advanced: and, in proportion to my estimate of her characteristic vigour of understanding, was this exceptional submission to an inferior mind mortifying to me. It seemed a kind of fascination, - part of the contemporaneous disturbance of judgment which, as I thought, was conspicuous in her reports of mesmeric phenomena, whether experienced or observed.

In this state of feeling I attended the editorial meeting at Mr. Tayler's house, to lay out the contents of the next number of the Prospective. Our division of labour charged me with the notice of the literature of philosophy: and my colleagues urged upon me the necessity of reviewing the "Letters". I felt and pleaded the difficult relation in which the task would place me; but yielded to two reconciling considerations; - that any other critic would more severely press upon my sister's share in the joint production; and that the volume would be correctly treated as the work of Mr. Atkinson, my sister being avowedly content with drawing him out, and securing his expositions for the world. Upon these lines, accordingly, the review is worked out. In one sentence only is my sister mentioned, - a sentence of grief for what she had surrendered to a misleading

guide; while all that precedes gives the measure of Mr. Atkinson from his previous writings, and all that follows is a reasoned analysis of his arguments in the volume itself. The effect of the paper thus constructed is now well known. For three years I was unaware of the breach it had occasioned; and learned it only when, being with my family within a few miles of Ambleside, and proposing, through a letter of my wife's, a few hours' visit at the Knoll, I found that my sister's house and heart were closed against me. The review was charged with all the offences of which Mrs. Chapman has since accused it, - but only in general terms of vituperation. To an entreaty that the alleged instances of false quotation and misleading statement should be pointed out, that I might at least have the chance of making amends for my own wrong, a curt refusal was returned. A similar demand, as I have recently learned, had already been addressed to her, in the form of a collective remonstrance, by our three surviving sisters and brother, and had met with a similar reception. Neither directly therefore, nor indirectly, have I ever been able to discover the passages for which I ought either to apologise or make adequate defence. All the citations are accompanied by proper references, which render the detection of "garbling" easy and certain. All the statements of opinion are either in the author's words, or compends of ampler expositions indicated by page and line; so that they are readily put to the test. All the arguments are in a form distinct and compressed, so as to leave no scope for evasion, but to lie open to exposure and attack. I can only say, that of the critical offences imputed to me I am unconscious and the motives assumed for them I know to be fictitious.

After all, I believe that the unpardonable sin of that article lay simply in this:- that from certain forgotten numbers of "The Zoist" I disinterred some lucubrations of Mr. Atkinson's, the mere citation of which rendered his authority ridiculous. They probably took my sister by surprise, and, distressing her pure literary taste, embarrassed for a moment her admiring intercourse with her correspondent, but, when explained away by

the ingenuities of friendship, acted with the power of a misfortune in common, and turned a united resentment upon the critic who occasioned it. That I did not foresee this was a real fault in my reckoning. Having said the least possible about my sister's share in the book, I felt no obligation of reserve with regard to the remaining author, whose name I never heard before, and whose qualifications to announce the laws of "Man's nature and development" I had to estimate merely from the evidence of his own writings. Losing sight altogether of his influence on my sister, I treated this question purely on its merits, and freely said of him what I should have said of any anonymous and unrelated author. However natural this was for me, it was no less natural for my sister to resent being spared criticism herself at the expense of her friend: and this generous impulse, I believe, it was which making her cast in her lot with his, defeated my purpose in criticizing him alone, and not only rendered his quarrel hers, but intensified it with unrestrained exaggeration.

Looking back at this calm distance at the whole transaction, I think it open to reasonable doubt whether it was well for me to become the critic of the "Letters" at all, even in the impersonal form of an anonymous reviewer. And I might have anticipated the fruitlessness of my attempt to withdraw the master from the disciple and try conclusions with him alone. But in the substance of the critique I see nothing to correct or retract. And in its tone I do not notice any uncalled-for severity. If compared with Edward Forbes's review of the same book (fairly representing the purely scientific estimate of its character), it indubitably stands much further within the limits of patient and considerate controversy.

I should perhaps have incurred less of my sister's displeasure in this affair, if our intercourse had continued to be as frequent as in our younger days. But three or four years before she had become possessed by the conviction that it was a breach of private confidence not to destroy friendly correspondence as fast as it arose; and, besides acting on this principle herself, had demanded the sacrifice of all her letters at the hands

of those to whom they were addressed. Against this severe exaction I had remonstrated in vain. It would have wrenched from me a large portion of those treasures of memory which often yield the chief revenue of solace and affection in old age, and which cannot consistently be given in trust, to be withdrawn in distrust. The only option left to me was, to cancel the old letters, or to receive no new ones. I looked over my stores, and made my choice with sadness, but with decision. The later correspondence had not been quite like the earlier. Still bright, frank, eager about kindly offices and disinterested ends, they had become short, summary and dictatorial: and touched condescendingly, if at all, on the subjects of thought and work of life which remained of supreme interest to me. In cases of divergent opinion they betrayed a sharp impatience which gave notice that any exchange of ideas was useless, and that the condition of happy intercourse must be the suppression of all serious dissent from her judgments. I could not conceal from myself the change which had insensibly modified our relation, and rendered its old style of confidences impossible: and I chose, if so it must be, to forfeit the future rather than the past. Except in the matter of correspondence, there was no active difference: she had been at my house, and I at hers: but such opportunities were rare; and the long silences between left it possible for vast changes of feeling to mature themselves on one side, without reporting themselves to the other. Hence it was that my sister, who was reticent to me alone, had committed herself to the harshest judgment of my Atkinson review, for years before I was aware of its effect.

The estrangement produced by this cause and its antecedents was all on one side. My affection for my sister Harriet survived all reproaches & mistakes; and, if she had permitted, would at any moment have taken me to her side for unconditional return to the old relation. If time had lessened our sympathies of thought, it had enlarged those of character, and had developed in hers a cheerful fortitude, an active benevolence, an unflinching fidelity to conviction, on which I looked with joyful honour,

and in view of which all vexing memories, were ready to die away.

The National Review, during the ten or twelve years of its existence, seemed always on the verge of a self-supporting position, but never quite succeeded in reaching it. The death of one or two of its best writers, and an injudicious change in its theological tone conceded to the scruples of others, were at last sufficient to shake its unstable balance and bring it down. Without being able to make head against the ever increasing taste for audacity in thought and style, it early obtained and held throughout a high literary repute and a moral weight of which its circulation was no adequate measure. I had no editorial responsibility in connection with it; but wrote for it, whenever I was able, chiefly on subjects theological or political.

My removal to London in 1857 I regarded as a final retirement from the pulpit; and for two [corrected to 'nearly 1½'] years I devoted myself exclusively to academic work. But on the lamented death, in 1858, of my old friend and fellow-student, Mr. Tagart, on his homeward journey from Transylvania, the joint ministry to his congregation was pressingly offered to Mr. Tayler and myself, with the understanding that, in consideration of our other engagements, only slight demands should be made upon us for pastoral duties in addition to the public services. We thought it right, with the sanction of the College authorities, to accept this invitation; and in February 1859 we entered upon our new charge. Bringing to it, in both instances, Lancashire habits and ideas, we did not feel satisfied till the Little Portland St. congregation, besides assembling for stated worship, had looked with a Christian eye upon its neighbourhood and made itself the centre of improved culture and kindly offices to the poorer population around. Through the generous response which was quickly made to our appeal, the small Sunday school which had already been formed under Mr. Tayler's impulse expanded into the noble set of Day and Sunday Schools now known as among the best in London. In these schools Mr. Tayler never ceased to feel the most lively practical interest. But, before two years had elapsed,



he found the public services of the chapel, though reduced to one in the day, too great a strain upon his strength, after the week's labours in his Lecture-room. For a little while he yielded to my earnest entreaty and postponed his purpose of retirement; but soon left the congregation to my sole charge. If this was a promotion, it was to me a sad and anxious one. Not only had I leaned, with affectionate confidence, on the support and cooperation of my senior, and taken whatever tasks he wished to leave me, but had found, in his preaching, at once intellectual & saintly, a refreshment and delight never to be repeated: and no change could be more grievous to me than the prospect of hearing thenceforth no voice but my own.

Nothing however remained for me, in this relation, but to work out, as far as possible, the aim which had always guided me, of separating, and yet combining, the prophetic and the teaching functions of the Christian ministry. The hours set apart for public worship should be absolutely surrendered, as it seems to me, to devout thought and utterance and the consecration of human life by Divine affections; and as a rule I could never, without feeling myself guilty of an abuse, treat the pulpit as a lecturer's platform, for didactic exposition, critical discussion, or philosophical speculation. Whoever occupies that place stands there as the organ of the common Christian feeling: to this he must freely lend his individuality, becoming only as the first voice in the chorus of consentient trust and aspiration. Yet he has also to exercise a gift of teaching. He administers a Religion grounded in the Reason and Conscience developed in history, summed up in doctrines, embodied in churches, applied in life; and in all these relations it must be enabled to know and to amend itself. To conduct this studious and discriminative process, he needs separate hours, a totally different mood and method, and an audience of those alone who are open to systematic reading and reflection on questions of morals and theology. All this part of my work I habitually withdrew from the pulpit and threw into courses of week-day lectures. Twice indeed, - once in Liverpool, and once in London, - I broke through this rule; and

having reached in each case a stage of theological opinion considerably removed from my starting point, felt it my duty to define anew the component lines and forms of religious truth, and set them clear of encumbering appendages. But in thus attempting "liberare animam meam", I limited the sermon, as far as possible, to the positive elements of spiritual faith, and reserved for the lecture-room the apparatus and process of proof and refutation. In this way, there passed under review, in the last ten years of my ministry, - the theory and essence of Religion, its Hellenic, Hebrew, and Medieval varieties, the basis and systems of Morals, the conditions & evidence of Revelation from the Divine to the Human mind, the growth of the Messianic doctrine, the origin of the New Testament literature, the interpretation of the chief Pauline Epistles, of the Acts of the Apostles, of the Book of Revelation, of the Synoptical Gospels as recording the life of Christ, and the source, age, and significance of the Johannine doctrine of his person. My own volumes of notes make me only too well aware how imperfectly these subjects were treated: but, at any rate, one who wished to pursue them was furnished with sufficient guidance to work out his own way wherever I had left him in the dark.

On the occurrence, in 1866, of a vacancy in the University College Professorship of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic, through the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Hoppus, I became a candidate for the Chair. At the age of 62 [corrected to 61] this was a step not to be taken without careful consideration: and so reasonable appeared to me a preference for some younger man, that I should have felt it no grievance, had my application been at once set aside on this ground. On the other hand, I was habitually teaching the subjects required within stone's throw of Univ<sup>y</sup> College, many students of which resorted to my classes and did well in their University Examinations: and, whilst thus a certain store of materials and experience was ready, I was conscious of not being sleepy in my methods, but on the watch to simplify or enrich them with every obtainable improvement.

Against the disadvantages of age there seemed therefore a sufficient set-off in my position to justify the offer of my services.

My previous work having been so much within sight of University College, I sought no testimony of competency except from two or three eminent "experts" in the subjects of the Chair, who could speak with some authority on technical matters not likely to be familiar to the electing body. I was aware from correspondence or personal intercourse, that F. W. Newman, J. S. Mill, and Dr. Thomson, Archbishop of York, had knowledge of such occasional writings as I had put forth on logical and metaphysical topics: and I asked them whether they would object to record their judgment of these, so far as they indicated fitness or unfitness to teach. Mr. Newman's answer was immediate, cordial, and exact. Mr. Mill was even more appreciative, and said what could hardly fail to be decisive, if produced in evidence but he added that, as he could not miss the opportunity of planting, if possible, a disciple of his own school in a place of influence, he must throw his weight into the scale of Mr. Croom Robertson's candidature, of whose competency he was well satisfied. His attestation therefore, privately so generous to me, must be withheld from use. The Archbishop of York sent me a reply, 12 months after the affair was all over, apologising for his silence, and candidly explaining it as the result of a theological scruple: for, if he had said what he thought true of my personal qualifications for the vacant office, he would have been helping to a place of influence one who did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. In this spectacle of Mr. Mill and the Archbishop moving hand in hand, under the common guidance of a sectarian motive, there is a curious irony.

In aid of its judgment in making new teaching appointments, the Council of University College consults the Senate of Professors, from which a Report is received after examination of the candidates' apparent merits. The Senate having reported in my favour, it was supposed that the matter was practically settled. But at the Council-meeting, Mr. Grote, whose official and personal influence was naturally powerful, strongly resisted

the usual action on the Report, and by his casting-vote negatived the Resolution for my appointment. His objection was, that, as a minister of Religion, I was disqualified for the Chair: and, if I remember right, he endeavoured (unsuccessfully) to carry a General Resolution, declaring that such appointments should be reserved for secular persons only. It was obvious to reply that, applications for the chair having been invited without any such limitation, it could not now be avowed as a ground of exclusion; that the retiring Professor himself had been a minister of Religion; and that, through the whole history of the College (as now), clergymen, Jewish preachers, and Nonconformist ministers, had been eligible, and elected, for its several chairs. The very principle indeed which the College was founded to represent was that of non-exclusion, - of scholars or of teachers, - on religious grounds, and the equal eligibility of all competent persons, irrespectively of their relations to theology, for its responsible offices.

The effect of the casting-vote was purely negative. No one was elected: no one was rejected: the proposed choice had simply not taken place. The Council accordingly began de novo, and advertised the vacancy over again as if for fresh applications, to be in their turn submitted to the judgment of the Senate. Of this advertisement I knew nothing; and my application, having received no answer, remained as it was. Mr. Robertson, I believe, re-applied: but no fresh candidate appeared. As the Senate therefore had no new materials before it, there was little chance of drawing from it any altered judgment. An attempt however was made to show that the candidates, though not more than before, were fewer: for my application, not having been renewed, might be treated as withdrawn. As it was still, with its supporting documents, in the Secretary's hands, it could not be so set aside without communication with me. But I might perhaps be brought to say, that I was not an applicant this second time; and then the act of stopping my candidature would be my own, and nothing would stand in the way of the desired result. I was accordingly pressed to declare whether

I had repeated my application; and had only to answer that, having heard nothing of my original application, no occasion for a second had arisen. The question before the Senate, being thus identical with the former one, could only be answered in the same way: but the effect of the answer might perhaps be neutralised by attaching a word of doubt whether it would be expedient to appoint a minister of religion, and adding that, if there was weight in this doubt, the Junior candidate presented satisfactory evidence of competency. I believe I am correct in saying that in this form the Senate's Report came before the Council. The awkwardness of a collision between "the two houses" being thus removed, the election of Mr. Robertson was secured by a coalition between those who objected to any minister of religion and those who objected to an unorthodox minister. There was the more room for the play of these objections, because my competitor had every merit that could be proved of an untried man, and gave no uncertain promise of those high qualifications for the functions of a teacher and an independent thinker which he has since evinced.

To the story which seemed here to close, there was still an appendix. Though the appointment to the Chair was legitimate and complete and there was no desire to disturb it; many of the College Governors saw, in the reasons which had avowedly determined it and which Mr. Grote had sought to erect into a rule recorded on the Minutes, a violation of the fundamental principle of their Institution; and called, by requisition a Special General Meeting of Proprietors to review the proceedings of the Council. The policy of this measure did little justice to its excellent intention. An abstract constitutional principle is put to too diverse a strain when its assertion, besides being retrospective and condemnatory, is matched against a crowd of inconvenient practical consequences. Any Resolution which could satisfy the Requisitionists would have been regarded as a vote of censure by the Council and been followed by their resignation: and their retirement could not but affect the stability of the appointment, in making which they had incurred unfavourable comment. Nor would any succes-

sors to them be readily found, under the liability to have their action called in question, not simply at their Annual rendering of their account, but at Special Meetings convened to arraign it. These consideration were sufficient to incline the majority, - now that the affair was over, - "quieta non movere"; even apart from the predominant influence of Mr. Grote and the school with whom any admission of Religion is a total disqualification for Philosophy. The proceedings of the Council were consequently upheld.

The College which, in these transactions, gained one admirable Professor, lost another. Prof<sup>r</sup> Augustus De Morgan, who by his matchless teaching had wrought the marvel of making Mathematics popular, and by his original researches had variously advanced as well as simplified their methods, had been originally drawn to the College by the attraction of its non-exclusive constitution, and from hearty allegiance to this, had given to it the industry of a life and the lustre of a brilliant reputation. With his simple & direct moral vision he saw at once that all he cared for in the College was at stake in the question which this election raised. Just and liberal to his inmost heart, and logical in his whole thought he despised negative and positive intolerance alike, and could never admit that the one was "broad" and the other "narrow". "I came here," he once said to me, "on the understanding that a man in office may have any theology, provided he sticks to his own subject in his class: if the stipulation is to be, that a man shall have no theology, I am just as much disqualified as you; and the College, instead of respecting conscience, snubs conscience; instead of comprehending everybody, excludes all but secularists." In his view, either the College had become unfaithful to its professions, or he had mistaken its professions and served it under an illusion: whichever it was, nothing remained for him but to take his leave of it. He resigned his chair. And though he could ill spare its modest emoluments, he forgot his private loss in the intensity of his public regrets. It is right to add that his judgment on this matter was entirely unaffected by any personal

preference. Both candidates were strangers to him in almost equal degree: and the friendly relation in which I stood to him in his declining days had its origin from the issue of this very affair. For aught I know, he may have thought me the less qualified candidate: in that case, he would no less have disapproved of my rejection on any other ground than that of my inferiority.

The vision of an enlarged sphere of responsibility having vanished, I returned to my "few youths in a corner" with unabated zeal. Happily, the scale and publicity of life have never been of any importance to me. The interest of my work has lain in its subjects rather than its witnesses or audience: and so long as there was some reception or reciprocation of thought to justify a student's enthusiasm, the sympathy of two or three served me as well as that of so many hundreds. As soon as it became evident that the chair in University College was filled by a thoroughly efficient teacher, I resigned into his hands, with the consent of the M.N.C. authorities, the instruction of our Undergraduate Students; who were ever after prepared in his classes for the University Examinations, till, on the recent appointment of Mr. Upton as my colleague & successor, the Committee, for reasons which I cannot appreciate, reverted to the old management. Relieved of the elementary teaching, I was enabled to revise and extend the more advanced courses given to the Senior students, - courses on which I have always wished that the whole attention of the Professor should be concentrated.

Nothing seriously interrupted the even course of my life till the summer of 1872, when warnings of weakened health, which had of late become frequent, spoke out with decisive emphasis. We spent the vacation in North Wales; and I had reserved for it, inter alia, a piece of work which seemed due from me as the writer of an Essay on "The Place of Mind in Nature & Intuition in Man". This essay had been elaborately criticized by Mr. Herbert Spencer: and my first leisure I had intended to employ in preparing a reply. The necessary notes and materials were ready: but every effort

to write out what I had to say brought on, after a short time, a giddiness which obliged me to leave my desk; and the manuscript, though I often returned to it, remained a fragment till the season for its timely appearance had passed. Throwing aside books and papers, I betook myself to the open air, - ascending Snowdon and Cader Idris, rowing on Lake Gwynant and the Dolgelly river; but from time to time was still visited by slight swimming in the head which led me instinctively to pause till it was gone. At the end of the vacation we went to the marriage of my son Basil at Clappersgate; and I remember reproaching myself for the misplaced depression which weighed upon me there. On our way home, we visited some friends at Leeds. I had found the journey, with several changes and in wretched weather, very fatiguing. Collecting the carriage wraps and packages on arrival, I stooped to pull a bag from under the seat; and brought on an attack of vertigo, in which the carriage seemed to revolve, and I wondered why there was no crash from its encounter with the ground. It was over in a moment, so that when I sat up again recovered my party was still stepping out of the carriage, and no one noticed anything except that I delayed my own movement on to the platform. I walked through the Station to the carriage which awaited us, and drove with my attentive companions five miles out of the town; untroubled except by the disappointment of inflicting such a poor creature upon the brightest, the friendliest, the most finished of English homes. I suffered no return of the attack; only the previous tendency to flushes of giddiness; and I felt no effects, except a weakness of nerve which rendered me unable to bear the noise of many voices, or any prolonged writing or reading. On consulting an eminent medical man I heard without surprise that the seizure was undoubtedly of the most serious nature, and that, though I might be able to return home, I must not indulge any further outlook. I therefore immediately sent in my resignation of the Little Portland St. pulpit; and prepared the way for a similar step in regard to the College, by explaining my inability to be present at the opening of the Session in the following week, and intimating a doubt whether



I should be capable of meeting my classes again.

Returning to London in a few days, I told my story to my kind friend and physician, Dr. Andrew Clark. After his usual exhaustive examination of the symptoms, he referred them to a "dynamic" disturbance of the circulation, involving no organic injury, and thought it probable that they might pass away and leave no trace; though, under strong excitement or overstrain, there might be a danger of their recurrence. Experience has for five years verified this judgment. By foregoing the stimulus of society, - which, in common with many studious men, I always found very exhausting, - and the interest of preaching, which was usually intense, I have done in that time as much literary and other work as in any previous lustrum of my life; have retained my mountaineering activity, which I test afresh every summer; have lost all tendency to giddiness, and even (may no Nemesis look over my shoulder as I write!) apparently outlived the gout. On looking back, I am thankful both for the postponement of infirmities, and for the notice to stand ready for departure. The reprieve enhances the worth of life while it lasts: the warning brings home to me how little it is finished when this first chapter ends.

My illness happily was not troubled by any temporal cares or any sudden need to set my affairs in order. Only three months before I had been surprised, - for a while overpowered, - by an act of unaccountable munificence which relieved the anxieties of retirement, and had given me occasion to make exact provision for my demise. At the close of the College Examination, my honoured friend, William Lamport (the measure of whose great character has since been discovered by his loss), drew me aside in the Library, and in a few feeling words, as simple as they were delicate, told me that, in conjunction with Mr. Ainsworth of the Floss, he had been commissioned to convey to me an expression of affectionate regard from a large number of persons who found their deeper thoughts reflected in my own; and, handing to me a Draft for 5,000 guineas (afterwards supplemented by 500 more), explained that an address would be forwarded to me with a

memorial in silver plate: but that he had selected this private method of procedure knowing my aversion to scenes of public compliment and parade. To complete this record of generosity I must add that, few opportunities having been given to London persons to join in this Northern action, my own congregation carried through a second stage, and took leave of me 8 months after, with a further presentation of £3,500, recorded in a touching inscription on a piece of plate. On these great gifts I can make no comment. I know not what has drawn them upon me. In the several offices of life, so far have I been from consciously exceeding their claims upon me, so as to deserve anything special at the hands of others, that I have never satisfied my own sense of obligation. But towards true and hearty service, I have always observed, the expectations of men are more apt to be too indulgent than too exigent; and the minister who, instead of waiting to be moulded by the pressure of his lot, honestly though imperfectly follows his own ideal and will not part with it, easily surpasses their demands, however short he falls of his own.

In 1872 the Diploma of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon me by Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts: and two years later, I was among the foreigners invested with the Degree of Doctor of Theology by the University of Leyden, on occasion of its Tercentenary celebration. Both these honours took me entirely by surprise, and compensated me in age for the Academical disabilities under which, as a nonconformist I had laboured in my youth. And the second was especially gratifying, as I was associated in it with so accomplished a scholar and divine as the Master of Balliol.

It only remains for me to record that in 1875 I resigned my offices in M.N.C., with the full intention of immediate and complete retirement. When however it was urged upon me that time would be required to mature new arrangements and enable my successor to overtake his whole work, I consented to retain for a while the position of Principal, and half the duties of my Professorship. These are still in my hands; but ready to be surrendered, as soon as my able partner in the Philosophical department is

prepared to take charge of the subjects for which I continue responsible.

[In the foregoing brief notes, made for an incidental purpose, away from home and all memorials, I have abstained from reference to (1.) my publications (2.) the affairs and discussions leading up to the Dissenters' Chapels Act (3.) the Unitarian Association and its relation to historical liberal nonconformity (4.) the Free Christian Union (5.) the Liberation Society and the Church question (6.) National foreign relations (the Crimean war & American Civil war) (7.) the Metaphysical Society (8.) Many Relations with persons more or less interesting, in private and public life.]

## APPENDIX B

Most of the letters contained in Appendix B are unpublished, although a few extracts from selected letters can be found in the biographies of Martineau. I have also included these as they contain large sections of unpublished material and are of interest in revealing what the biographers omitted.

London, Dec. 20. 1878

My dear Mr. Carpenter,

Thirty-seven years ago I put on record, at the request of his biographer, a few recollections of your grandfather's household during my school years. The chief figure in the picture which I had then to call up naturally stood out in very strong lights of memory, which rendered it easy to reproduce it with some minuteness of detail. A man must be without head or heart who, by mid life, could forget such a master as Dr. Lant Carpenter, or remember him without affectionate veneration. But it is not easy, at double that age, to recover distinct vision of a figure then quite secondary and moving only in the shadowy back-ground of the scene; and in yielding to your request for some contemporary impressions of your aunt Mary's childhood, I am led rather by a veteran's impulse of friendship, than by any hope of adding a single lineament to the portrait you will have to draw.

It was in the summer of 1819 that I became a pupil of your grandfather's, - a sallow stripling of fourteen, of shy and sensitive temperament, but superficially hardened by the rude discipline of a public school. Of the twelve pupils, nearly half were my superiors or equals in age: and we formed together an upper class, with studies distinct from those of the Juniors. This association however did not extend to all our pursuits. While we had the same lessons in science, in history, in geography, and in the Greek Testament, a regard for our unequal proficiency and different destinations threw us into smaller groups for classics and mathematics; and in the latter especially, from their importance to my intended profession of Civil Engineer, I had to work alone. At two or three points this round of studies brought us into contact with Mary Carpenter.

A boy's impression of new companions is necessarily relative to his own family experience. And I well remember the kind of respectful wonder with which, coming from free and easy ways with my sisters, I was inspired towards the sedate little girl of twelve, who looked at you so steadily and always spoke like a book; so that, in talking to her, what you meant for sense

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seemed to turn into nonsense on the way. In her exterior, as in her mental characteristics, she seemed to be no longer the child. With a somewhat columnar figure and no springiness of movement, she glided quietly about and was seldom seen to run: and a certain want of suppleness & natural grace interfered with her proficiency in the usual feminine accomplishments with the needle, at the piano, and in the dance; and occasioned a pleasant surprise when taking her pencil & colour-box in hand, she revealed the direction in which her sense of beauty could conquer difficulties & enable her really to excel. The early maturity which is so often reached by the eldest in a family was strongly marked in her countenance; - not by any look of forwardness or careless ease; still less by any seeming hardness against sympathetic impressions from others; but by a certain fixity of thoughtful attention, and the clear self-possession which arises from self-forgetfulness. There were traces upon that grave young face, if my memory does not mislead me, of an inward conflict for ascendancy between the anxious vigilance of a scrupulous conscience and the trustful reverence of a filial heart, tender alike to the father on earth & the Father in heaven.

In the public grammar-schools sixty years ago, the really efficient teaching was almost limited to Greek & Latin, with the subsidiary mythology and history: and I can never forget the shame I felt on discovering at Bristol the depth of my ignorance of the natural world and of modern times. Mrs. Carpenter had an extraordinary knowledge of Geography, and taught it to her children and the pupils with admirable fulness of both physical description and historical incident: and, in comparison particularly with Mary Carpenter, I soon found myself a simpleton in this field, and looked up to her as an oracle. She appeared to me to have the world, and all that had happened in it at her fingers' end, as if she had been always and everywhere in it; whilst I could only blunder through the counties and the kings of England, and could make a better map of Greece than of Great Britain. This feeling of humiliation was not abated by Mrs. Carpenter's willingness (doubt-

Dec. 20. 1878

less with a view to stimulate emulation) to play upon it with ridicule, or with compassionate excuses that were very like contempt: but at all events it had its compensations in the sincere respect with which it filled me for the well-informed and unassuming girl who picked up my dropped answers and corrected my mistakes.

It was not, I think, till the second of my Bristol years that Mary Carpenter joined the older pupils in certain special lessons. Successive courses of instruction were given on Geology, on Natural Philosophy, and Chemistry, with illustrative specimens, diagrams, and experiments: but, interesting as they were to us, I recall nothing memorable with regard to her personal share in the work. Her Latin reading, which I seem to associate most with the *Agricola* of Tacitus, was marked by the same conscientious care which she evinced in everything; securing accuracy, but not escaping stiffness; unless, at the appeal of some pathetic passage which softened more than the outer voice, it assumed for the moment a higher character, and admitted a gleam of poetic light. Of these exceptional touches I retain the more lively impression because, through some difference of temperament, I was not in general much moved by the things which most satisfied her taste in literature, poetry, and art: so that where a real chord of sympathy was struck, the tones have naturally vibrated long.

Every Monday morning we had a Greek Testament reading with Dr. Carpenter; intended not less as a religious lesson than as an exercise in the language and criticism of Scripture. That hour was always one of deep interest, and left, I am persuaded, lasting traces on the character of many a boy previously averse to serious thought. The influences of Sunday were still fresh. Upon the dear master they were visible in a certain toning down of his usual restless energy, and a serenity and tenderness of spirit, which removed all fears & all reserves, and often made the lesson an exchange of confidences among us all. To his daughter he was prophet as well as parent; and her whole mood and demeanour reflected his. While translating her verses with precision, and

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prepared with answers to questions of history & archeology, she unconsciously betrayed, by voice, by eye, by the very mode of holding her book, that she treated the text as sacred, and in following its story felt a touch from which a divine virtue went out. The Gospels were certainly read with critical care and faithful comparison: and if the hopelessness of the Harmonist's problem was unfelt, and the plain anachronisms of thought were unobserved, and its hills and valleys were levelled to one highway of sanctity, it was because an absorbing veneration for the person of Christ as supernatural filled the teacher's whole mind, and excluded the finer perceptions of the historical sense and even obscured the gradations of spiritual character. I suspect that this early set of her religious affections, carried out as it was though her whole inner and outer life, rendered the newer lights of biblical criticism always unwelcome to Mary Carpenter, and made her glad to seek her reforming inspirations in purely practical directions.

Similar in its matter and influence was the Sunday lesson, in which she also was our companion. We had not indeed always the same subject: at one time Paley's Natural Theology, at another, his Evidences of Christianity, formed our text-book. But my most considerable memory is of certain "Notes and Observations on the Gospels" which Dr. Carpenter wrote for us and sent to press as they were produced. They remained a fragment: but, as far as they went, they supplied all that was necessary to render the study of the Evangelical history intelligent and interesting. In this class too it was a matter of course that Mary's answers were exact and complete, and rendered so less by superior intelligence than by deeper interest, being subsidiary to a picture on which her inner eye was reverently fixed. The remainder of the day was so distributed as to leave no room for listless idleness, and yet to infuse into it a bright though serious repose; and her profound entrance into its spirit, manifest in a certain air of quickened yet calmer life, has left with me an indelible image still prominent among the contents of those delightful days. Even her figure, in listening to her father's services at Lewin's Mead meeting-house, rises distinctly before me as I



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write. For, instead of having my place, with the other pupils, in the long line of the family pew, I usually sat with an aunt in a seat at right angles to the other and with a near front-view of it. And as I now range in thought over its series of vanished forms, not one of them is clearer than that intent young daughter lost to herself and all around, and surrendered to the sweet pieties that flowed upon that winning voice. And at the end of the day, when evening prayers and supper were over and the Juniors had gone to bed, and the rest of us lingered for a precious half-hour of various talk, she was privileged to sit, - with her arm in her father's, - sometimes as a silent listener; at others, helping us to draw from him his thoughts on some problem that perplexed us; or, in lighter moods, tempting him to tell the stories of his College days. From these Sunday evenings we seemed to go to rest with better ordered minds and warmer hearts.

Some time during my two years at Bristol (I think it was shortly after your uncle Philip's birth) Mary Carpenter was laid up with a long and painful affection of her eyes, requiring her for many weeks to live in a darkened room and abstain from all attempt to use her sight. The illness involved not only privation but anxiety: for there was serious danger of its ending in blindness. To few natures could the passiveness to which she was then reduced be more trying than to her. But her patience and sweetness of disposition remained perfect throughout; and her ingenuity was never at fault in saving trouble to others by acting as general memory and time-keeper with regard to all household arrangements as they came due. These characteristics would naturally go to the hearts of her parents and appear to them in the brightest light. But I believe that my impression of them is due - rather to the testimony of her medical attendant, Mr. Estlin, whose experience and temperament protected him from enthusiasm, and who spoke of her spirit through this illness with an unwonted warmth.

On looking back at these slight notes, I think it possible that they give too solemn an air to the young figure which they attempt to sketch. Two

Dec. 20. 1878

causes may have contributed to this. Of the two sisters nearest in age, Mary and Anna, whom one always remembers together, the latter was so gleeful and kindling that, beside her, many a bright nature would look grave. And then, the eldest daughter of the family could not have been the companion of our studies, without some habitual exercise of discretion and reserve; nor was she our associate except at times of serious interest or pursuit. If I have dwelt too exclusively on the more earnest aspects of her early life, it is simply that the lighter play of her character was reserved for other witnesses; few of whom, I fear, survive to tell the pleasant tale.

Believe me always,

Yours very faithfully,

James Martineau (signed)

Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A.

35, Gordon Square,

London. W.C.

Feb. 8. 1887

My dear Mr. Carpenter,

The meeting tomorrow, 3 P.M. at Willis's Rooms, is of those who signed Mr. Burnett's Memorial of Jan<sup>y</sup> 1886; and there are no tickets. But you will be quite admissible without any introduction. In the improbable case of any demur at the entrance, a reference to Mr. Macdonald or to me will at once remove it. The meeting will be a small one; as the whole number of signers does not exceed 130, scattered all over the country: and we cannot expect attendance from any but Londoners. But the meeting is a necessary constitutional step to a larger mode of action.

Had there been time, I should have been very glad to talk the matter over with you previously: because the scheme, having been for a week or ten days in the hands of the Memorialists, will be assumed as known and not expounded ab initio. I enclose you a Copy, in case you should have time to look at it. But, from the enacting form into which it is thrown, it presents itself without its reasons. The essence of it, as you will see, is, Disestablishment without Disendowment, so far as the present Ch. of E. goes: i.e. all ecclesiastical Law is flung out of the Statute book, and the State relinquishes Church definition & control in favour of Self-government in the Episcopalian Church as complete as in the present Nonconformist denominations; stipulating however that the lay control hitherto secured by Parliamentary rule shall be preserved in the shape of a two to one preponderance in the autonomous constitution. The Episcopal Church, thus set free to develop and reform itself, takes its place side by side with the other denominations; keeping its own peculiar endowments since 1662 when for the first time it chose to separate itself by excommunicating all the other strugglers for the moulding of the One Church; but sharing with the no less legitimate Puritan factors of our Engl. Christendom, the earlier endowments given to

Feb. 8. 1887

the undivided whole. The Religious bodies thus coordinated are then linked together as Federal members of a United English Christian Church, with loyalty towards each other under the common Head and for the vast mass of common work, without breach of the interior allegiance of each individual to the particular Communion of his baptism or his voluntary naturalisation. That is the leading idea pervading the enclosed papers.

Ever cordially Yours,

James Martineau (signed)

35, Gordon Square,

London. W.C.

Feb. 12. 1889

Dear Mr. Carpenter,

I was sorry to be withdrawn from our meeting yesterday by another at my own house, due at 5. P.M.

I quite believe that between your implicit meaning and my explicit there is no essential difference: and that towards individual men, such as F.W. Newman & Voysey on the one hand, and Card<sup>1</sup> Newman or F.D. Maurice on the other, we should feel much alike. There is not one of them to whom we should not feel drawn, from different sides, into "religious fellowship" and look up as touched by the spirit of God. If there be a common element of feeling in all these cases, it is due to the Theistic meaning carried in the word "religious"; and, I suppose, would fail us if we went to Newton Hall to hear Fred<sup>k</sup> Harrison's "Worship of Humanity". The mere non-requirement of 'particular doctrines' would not religiously bend us to that 'particular people'. To deem them, as they deem themselves, a religious organism is one of those corruptions of language which betray the dry rot so actively at work within our civilisation. To guard against this disintegrating agency, it is needful, I think, to say explicitly, what you think implicitly, that religious fellowship means fellowship in the worship of God.

Organisation which is to grasp multitudes must deal wholesale with the materials, and avoiding border-land refinements, seize upon the common positive sentiment or aim which has the maximum of depth & largeness combined, I am persuaded that, in our churches, that is to be still found in the type of Religion and Life presented in the person of Christ; and that out of this ideal essence all may be most simply developed that is needed for the elevation of human character. Every proposal to quit this base only puts us upon a narrower and more transitory, and is made in concession to a mere ignorant use of the word 'Christian', which it seems to me unfaithful to accept.

Feb. 12. 1889

With regard to the formation of a London Provincial Assembly, I have nothing to object, beyond the scanty trust which I can place in an empty framework, without practical function to perform. But though preferring the converse order of genesis, I am willing to hope that we may find something useful to do, and be able to avoid the cacoethes loquendi.

I am very glad that the Pastorate Fund has come in for a good word at last to comfort it under its many snubbings.

Ever cordially Yours,

James Martineau (signed)

The Polchar,  
Rothiemurchus,  
Aviemore, N.B.

July 18. 1898

My dear Estlin,

Unavoidable preengagements to sundry Highland Lakes and Mountain tops have made me slow in answering your kind letter of the 9<sup>th</sup>, which brought with it so many delightful memories of Borrowdale adventure. I heartily approve of your suggestion respecting the Old-Students' presentation of a pictorial Window to the College Chapel at Oxford; and shall deem it a privilege to be answerable for £5 of the cost. Though I feel no scruple about having recourse to the Burne Jones & Morris school of Sacred Art, I am of opinion that the design will require to be carefully watched if it is to be kept true to our conception of the Saviour's divine work, without any involuntary blending of colour from theirs. The longer I study the literary genesis and comparative contents of our Gospels, the more does the securely historical nucleus of their reports respecting the Person & Sayings of Jesus shrink and become overlaid with a diluting admixture of spoiling comments betraying the work of erroneous expectation of a later time; yet the more profound is my reverent reliance on that divine "Logos" as the pure expression of the Human Soul in its revealing experience of God. Lifted by inward affection and outward self-sacrifice into realisation of the highest Theism, Jesus had to remain true to the lower conditions of his country and his time, if he were to speak home to the hearts of his people. And so would come to pass an inevitable and unholy blending of popular tradition and transcendent sanctity of truth. The Synoptic Gospels, apart from their differences inter se, plainly contain, in each case, examples of an incongruous mixture of Israelitish mythology with the genuine oracles of eternal life: and it is only by spiritual analysis that the permanent Divine essence can be disengaged from its perishable historical appendages. This is but the old distinction between "the letter" and "the spirit", - never yet effectively carried out except by the Society of

July 18. 1898

"Friends": the Catholics' vow of allegiance being taken to "the Church", the Protestants' to "the letter of Scripture"; the "Friends" to the inward "Spirit of God" in the responding Conscience.

Looking at our College from this point of view, I think it lays too preponderant, - not to say exclusive a stress on unimpeachable criticism & interpretation of the text of Scripture; as if to get at their meaning and appropriate it was to fulfill the condition of Christian discipleship. This Protestant scripturalism, happily loosening its hold, is absolutely fatal to any noble enthusiasm of piety in the present day: and the real disciple, who is caught up & transformed by the spirit of the Master receives his regeneration from a few divinely cleansing words, - a beatitude here, - a parable there, - a cry of prayer beneath the midnight sky, - which lay open his intimate communion with the Father of spirits. Would that these glimpses, on which we may depend as unmodified by the fortuities of current tradition, were less scanty. They are infinitely precious.

I think with much regret of your partial retirement from College work; & hope that you will retain whatever is consistent with the larger plans for which you have to make provision. We are still in my opinion, far behindhand in N.T. criticism and interpretation, and are thereby kept stationary in our hesitating attitude towards Religious Philosophy; I rejoice to hear of the abundant work which you keep in view for years to come.

I remain, always

Affectionately Yours,

James Martineau (signed)



5, Gordon St. W.C.

Mar. 31. 1878

Dear Mr. Davis,

If anything I have written has touched a chord of sadness in your heart, I am certainly bound so to soften or modify its tone, if I can, as to relieve the impression which I did not mean to give. The chief difficulty I feel in making the attempt arises from the fineness of the distinction which you draw between the two states of mind which you contrast and regard as, respectively, defective in spiritual apprehension, and complete. In our communion with God, how is it possible for us to establish any real difference between experience of his manifestations & consciousness of himself? Even in our intercourse with a friend, nothing reaches us but the acts and effects of his life: it is by an inward operation of natural faith on our part that his words and looks become representative expressions of a personality like our own. The passage of our thought from the perceived phenomena to their believed cause is so instantaneous that you may call it immediate knowledge, especially as there is no other step between which makes it mediate: but it no less involves a reference of changes experienced to a source whence they come, than does that recognition of our highest affections as divine which, by way of contrast with immediate knowledge, you designate as only "trust" or "faith". It appears to me therefore that we know the presence of God with us and his agency upon us in precisely the same evidence that assures us of our life with one another: in neither case are we cognizant only of manifestations: in both, the manifestations are given to our feeling that we may know the realities behind. Knowledge other than by this act of Reason, - Vision other than that of Faith, - appear to me quite inconceivable, - at variance with the very constitution of Mind as alone we are acquainted with it. No doubt, in different stages of spiritual culture, even in different moods of the same, - nay, in different types of natural faculty, - the power of vividly realizing the Divine Presence in personal communion will greatly vary: and so long as it is not dimmed by unfaithfulness and negligence, no one should despond under its

Mar. 31. 1878

imperfection. There is, in some of the best people I have known, a "slowness of heart" in spiritual things, which is their cross and not their reproach; and which would first become a sin, if they set up their defect as a standard for the world, and derided the experience on which they could not enter. But how accessible and real, to pure and simple minds, may become the direct life with God, seems evident from the private history of innumerable persons, belonging to the better times and more fervent sects of Christendom.

The absorption in the living God which Wordsworth describes is a more exceptional state, because the agency of God in Nature is, in effect upon us though not in reality, less immediate than his action on the human soul; and is therefore more difficult to realize. The realm of Nature he administers by fore-announced and pledged methods, the perseverance of which have all the effect of mechanism on us, till we check the impression by an effort of thought. But, in the human soul, he has reserved a free space, with which his own Free Spirit may enter into relations, and where nothing hinders his acting pro re nata with gifts of light and comfort and inspiration. Whatever we recognise as Divine in this personal sphere affects us as flowing from immediate affection and as part of our biographical account with the Father of our spirits. It comes home to us therefore with intimate conviction, and draws us closer to him. But his agency in Nature is in relation to the whole, as the Sustainer of a universal Order, which takes no separate heed of any individual creature subjected to it: and therefore, although the beauty & grandeur of the spectacle glorify the conception of him, yet the moral attributes are absent or in the background. And hence, this nature-worship is apt to become an ineffectual Pantheism, productive, it may be, of poetry, but feeble & barren in life.

I can only say that the true part of a man, in relation to God, seems to be - to give all that is claimed, and claim nothing that is not given. And I profoundly believe that whoever will cheerfully surrender himself to the daily duty and the prayer of faith, will not long be left in the

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shadows, but will emerge into a light which he knows to be divine.

I fear that I may not quite have spoken to your feeling. If I have not, come & see me: and we may perhaps enable our thoughts to meet more exactly.

Believe me always,

Yours faithfully,

James Martineau (signed)

Mr. V. D. Davis

5, Gordon Street,  
London. W.C.

Dec. 28. 1879

Dear Mr. Davis,

Your letter answered in the most welcome way questions about your prospects to which I had found no one able to give a distinct reply. I am truly glad to find that you have not waited in vain for the settlement of the Christchurch affairs; and still more so that you can enter upon your work with the faith and hope that will remove its mountains.

In any case I rejoice that you have got your foot upon the rock. But, as it is so, I still wonder how you can shape your faith into the mere negative expression, - "something not-yourself to lean on," - a phrase devised only to mark the relinquishment of the "Living God", and painfully inadequate to the needs of any personal trust and affection. As you certainly do not mean it in Matthew Arnold's sense, what is there to recommend the use of anti-theistic language for the expression of theistic ideas? I confess that this type of amphibious conception, which is born on the earth yet tries to swim in the deep, is to me more unreal & unsatisfactory than any form of plain-spoken belief or unbelief: and the mischief of giving-in to it appears to me immeasurable. The less you mean it in the sense which it has for its author, the more should I earnestly entreat you to let it alone, and hold fast by the terms from which no Theism, Christian or other, has ever divorced itself.

You give me quite a new idea of the Nottingham position, when you describe it as assistantship to Mr. Armstrong in both congregations. In the relations thus established there are important advantages, especially at the outset: his counsels and experience will sustain you in many a difficulty: and my dear old friend, Mr. Tayler, would think you the most favoured of ministers, to begin your work under such guidance from a faithful Senior. For my own part, I am disposed, on the whole, to prefer the discipline given

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by undivided responsibility. But there are good reasons on both sides: and I have no fear of your meeting in Nottingham with any of the graver difficulties which sometimes embarrass the relation between senior & junior colleagues in the same ministry.

We have a great change in our College this Session, through the unexpected arrival of 7 or 8 new students; so that their predecessors are quite in a minority. Considering that they are rather a various set, we have worked well into form during the first term; and pursue our way very pleasantly and earnestly together.

With warm regards and best New Year's wishes,

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

James Martineau (signed)

Rev. V. D. Davis

35, Gordon Square,

London. W.C.

Dec. 22. 1891

Dear Mr. Davis,

If anything in my letter seemed to imply, not simple regret, but virtual reproach, I pray you to forgive it & to believe that it went quite beyond any feeling ever present to me. On the particular subject of the right limits to the use of the word Unitarian I am in no position to reproach others who take your view: for in my early ministry, I myself had no other thought, and under its influence suggested and organized in Dublin the Irish Unitarian Association, with congregational representation. The Unitarians of that day, - in England at all events, - were moulded by leaders, - Priestley from the orthodox Dissenters, Lindsey from the Church of England, - who had simply adopted a new theology, without moving a hair's breadth from their old assumption, that Christian communion must be based on concurrence in theological doctrine. To one imbued, as I was, with this notion the idea of a Unitarian Church, far from being repulsive, was in a high degree awakening to zeal; & I acted on it without misgiving; - falling in with the then universal assumption that there could be only one way of right-thinking, - which was necessarily a way of like-thinking: so that people in quest of it might be sure they were astray, if they allowed any latitude. This genuine dogmatic principle, - the principle of an orthodoxy, - everywhere prevailing, made church differ from church just according as our doxy differs from your doxy, and took for granted the presence, by an act of collective thinking, of one & the same doxy among all the members of a single church. Under such condition nothing could be more proper than to designate each church by a doctrinal name.

The Hewley suit & the subsequent attack upon the Unitarian inheritance of the Presbyterian Meeting-Houses erected under the Act of Toleration led to researches into the early history of Nonconformity which revealed a tot-

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ally different conception of church fellowship & exhibited it, not in profession only, but in practical operation through a testing period of not less than 3 generations. This conception removed all particular varieties of theological (i.e. biblical) interpretation out of the way of Christian communion, and forbade, as ultra vires, any terms of fellowship beyond what are implied in the worship of God and devoted allegiance to the spirit of Christ. And this principle was avowed expressly on the ground that not only might the existing forms of doctrine save some else forgotten aspect of Divine things, but the future also, with its finer and larger vision, might have more light to bring out of the sacred elements of the Scriptures & of human experience. When this feature of our old Baxterian Nonconformity burst upon us, as their characteristic distinction, it produced a profound impression by its nobleness on the clearest & strongest minded of our laymen, especially on the small group of professional men who had been instrumental in forming the B. and F. Unitarian Association; as you may see by quotations, in the paper "Church Life or Sect Life" (Vol II of my 'Essays' pp 411-413), from contemporary letters of Mr. Edgar Taylor's. It revealed at once the false position into which we had been thrown by the ecclesiastical appropriation of the doctrinal name; which disabled the B. & F. U. A. for defending our Chapel-rights by pleading the doctrinal neutrality & openness of the pulpits; and compelled Mr. Apland to create for the nonce a "Presbyterian Association", enabling us to put forth with a grave face a claim to the newly-discovered old catholicity. This comprehensive principle it was which so much endeared the memory of Baxter to the late Dean Stanley; who was astonished at our degeneracy in contradicting it by taking up with the name 'Unitarian'.

For church fellowship, then, I ask no more and can endure no more than common worship of God as infinitely Holy, & nurture of the Christian life, with recognition, as admissible, of past & future developments of Theological doctrine. You also acknowledge this one fundamental, and claim it alike for

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our forefathers & for ourselves & for our successors: so that when we employ the word We in speaking of our religious ideas & usages, it will cover all the generations and hold the body in unity. But the moment you proceed to say (ecclesiastically) "We are Unitarians", you introduce schism into this body; passing sub silentio its real characteristic, and affirming, as if of the whole, what is true only (if at all) of the living, and is moreover, as a truth, a mere dependent consequence of the suppressed principle. Do you really think that a generation occupying a single stage of a long historical existence has a right to brand its own peculiar marks upon the face of the whole sanctuary in which great drama is set forth? It affects me as an ingratitude to the past and a usurpation of the future.

The attempt to make the word "Unitarian" mean not so much any doctrine as free thought, with a long train of glories to dazzle away the unwelcome original signification, is of a kind, which, on reflection, cannot retain your approval. The meaning of an epithet surely is found in the quality in virtue of which it is applied. To earn the name "Unitarian", is anything requisite but to hold the Unipersonality of God as distinguished from the Tripersonality? That then is the word's meaning, and its whole meaning. One of whom it is predicated may be and have all sorts of things besides, some or other of which may come into your mind when you hear his doctrinal position defined: but these are absolutely foreign to the meaning of the word. It is not true therefore that "openness to doctrinal change" forms any part of the connotation of the word Unitarian. To designate our religious body by a term which burkes its permanent characteristic & singles out an accident in its history is, in my opinion, at once a logical blunder & a moral unfaithfulness, induced by forgetfulness of all but ourselves and our time. If it were right now, it would have been right in our predecessors to label their Meeting-houses at one time Trinitarian, at another Arian, & for our successors to be always on the watch for the ripe date of a new baptism; cancelling thus all claim on continuous identity, and providing for ever-



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recurring internal discord.

The plea that, the name being given us by others, we shall be understood only when we take it, is with me a conclusive reason for declining it. They give it to us because they have no other rule for classifying the constituent parts of Christendom than the measure of their orthodoxy & their relation to the creeds. If we let them have their way and ourselves appropriate the description, we acquiesce in their rule: to protest against which, in hope of superseding it, is the special mission to which we are born & for which we live. By accepting the name we make sure therefore not of being understood, but of being misunderstood.

It is asked, "What distinctive name can we have, if not supplied by type of doctrine?" I answer, "The very essence of the open principle, in its ecclesiastical application takes shape in the injunction, 'Refuse all distinctive names, and sacredly guard the catholicity of Christ: however few you may be, let the two or three that are gathered together be united only in that love of his which is in their midst, and be ready to bear it wherever his would go.'" This attitude is precisely that of the "Quakers", who alone share with us the exemption from all but spiritual-ties with their moral implications. If any one with a predominant doctrinal curiosity wants to know about their present theology or ours, he can learn it by a little experience in the respective meeting-houses, or a little reading of the respective literatures. If more is needed, for the specification of the religious society to be indicated, there are plenty of neutral names, local, historical, personal, or descriptive of usage, without resorting to the abstruse classifications of doctrinal system.

Christians with whom the acceptance of dogma is part of a "scheme of salvation" have an excuse which we have not for organizing their communion around a doctrinal name. It marks what they cling to, not simply as a true belief, but as a redemption from ruin & a reconciliation to God; only by holding on to it can they form together a society of the saved. To us, our

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different doctrine has no such significance: it "saves" us from nothing worse than participation in that horrible notion. And even this it does, not intrinsically & necessarily, as the Mahomedan Unitarianism shows, but only because our doctrine has been reached through a prior release of religious truth from a fixed form, and endowment with life and growth.

And here we may see how facts are inverted when our freedom of intellectual movement is treated as a matter of course involved in our Unitarianism. It is not the consequence, but the condition, of our Unitarianism, which came in quietly and almost unconsciously through the absences among the Baxterians, of the restraints devised for securing a stationary condition. In itself & apart from such a parentage, absolute monotheism, as among the Jews and some of the monarchian early Christian sects, tends towards rigour & intolerance not less than the ascendent Churches of Christendom.

I cannot understand in what sense a church which gives itself out as Unitarian can be called "free"? The claim, I presume, refers to "freedom for theological change", without prejudice to position within the church. If it is affirmed of each member of a congregation united in partnership of Unitarian belief, is he free then to become Trinitarian without forfeiture of fellowship with those whose fundamental bond holds him no more? If he remains, will it be on the same terms as before or no longer in the interior, but on friendly sufferance? If no difference is made, how often may this process be repeated, without impairing the fitness of the name? If that name does not give notice to Trinitarians that the place is preoccupied & does not profess to provide for them, what meaning can they attach to it? And if, in spite of this, they go and through general sympathy with the spirit of the services, attach themselves to the place, must it not be at the cost of being falsely classed with Unitarians? And can you take credit for catholicity in welcoming them, yet feel no shame for the misleading label which you force them to assume? If you want to convert men, what can be less inviting to them than to meet them with a flat contradiction of their present belief?

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If "freedom" is predicated of a congregation corporately as one of a number organized as a collective Unitarian Church, it must mean that change of theology will incur no penalties within, or removal from, the general body. Should a congregation then use its liberty in taking up with some form of Trinitarian doctrine, it would still be a constituent member of the "Unitarian Church"! Is it not obvious that our doctrinal friends, in their talk of freedom, tacitly stipulate for movement in only one direction?

There is, in short, no escape from the hopeless dilemma: Theology moves through the generations; Worshipping Bodies, with their spiritual discipline, stay. To seek a name for the latter from the vocabulary of the former, must either break up the identity of the Church, or hamper and arrest the progress of Theology.

You cannot wonder at the grave regrets & apprehensions which, with these convictions, I feel in regard to the religious body which has supplied me with my life-work. From the first insight into this matter to the present date, - through 60 years I have always said 'To a Unitarian church I can never belong'. And now, at the end, I find myself evidently doomed to become an alien. It is of little moment, personally, to one who has so short a stay. But it is painful to transfer my unabated faith in the future of English Christendom to other bodies than that which seemed to have the promise of the time to come. The same kind of opportunity as that which we have failed to appreciate will, I doubt not, repeat itself to others better qualified to interpret, - and use it. But in the change of Providential instruments, I cannot but enter into Paul's feeling towards Israel, and own that "I have great sorrow in my heart, and could wish myself cast away for my brethren's sake", if they only could return to be "the children of the promise".

I have said too much already, and must not touch on points in your paper of which I have treated in several printed Essays and Speeches.

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Indeed, I need your indulgence for the inordinate demand which I have made on your patience.

I remain, always,

Yours affectionately,

James Martineau (signed)

The Polchar,  
Rothiemurchus,  
Aviemore N.B.  
August. 13. 1894

Dear Mr. Davis,

I fear that I could not stand such close catechising as yours on the language of my sermons, written as they were at different stages of a mental life which has been far from stationary or self-consistent. And the particular expressions on which you comment are far from satisfying my own feeling in regard to the relation of the Divine Spirit to the human soul in general and, as distinguished from this, to that of Christ as exceptional. Yet they fairly admit, I think if they do not adequately convey, the meaning in which I intended them to be taken. In what sense, you ask, is God "personally there" in the soul of Christ, otherwise or more than in the soul of every man? If He entirely fills and makes up the mind of Jesus, is not the humanity of the latter swallowed up, or left to consist only of his bodily organism? And in that case there is only One Person there, and the relation between two is lost.

By Personality I understand self-conscious preferential agency. Where the same volitional preference is, at the same moment, twice felt and acted on, there are two Persons. If the resulting Act, outward or inward, be one, they are co-agents in it. Each is self-conscious of what he wills; and each is aware of what the other wills: each therefore knows himself as a Person, and knows the other as a Person; & is "personally there". If one be Man & the other God, and the preference be Moral, Man venerates and God approves; and both love the same Righteousness. The cooperation of the two personalities does not appear to me difficult to conceive. Surely God may suggest or inspire the right and holy, while leaving Man free to do it or to refrain; if so, each personality has its clear field of intentional operation, and yet the result is a single act; God being answerable for

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the possibility; Man, for the actuality. A holy volition, - a holy character (the sum of such volitions), - can no more issue from one personality, than a harmony or a unison can come from one sounded note: it is a consonance, and takes two at least to bring it out. And in the moral and spiritual life it is the Divine essence which contains the scale of graduated goodness, and the Divine voice within that, in each case, sets the leading note, inviting the Human to fall in with concordant or identical will.

God, in this view, is no doubt "personally there" in "all human souls, however imperfect"; only however, in the antecedent promptings to right volitions, not in the determination to wrong ones, or the character as formed or modified by them. These are the discordant elements that jar with his perfection and grate upon his will.

The Divineness which I meant to claim for Jesus is no other than that which I recognise in every human soul which realises its possible communion with the Heavenly Father. And preeminence which I ascribe to him is simply one of degree; so superlative, however, as to stand out in strong relief from the plane of ordinary history, and extort the belief of special revealing purpose from the Theist who has faith in the Providential education of the human race.

I shall look with eagerness for your notice of May's life of Sam<sup>1</sup> Longfellow, I have not seen the book: but I knew S.L. personally, and have always felt a great affection for him. All that I have seen of his, Hymns, Essays, Letters, has given me an ever-growing appreciation of his wisdom and goodness.

Of your removal to Liscard I heard with some regret on behalf of the dear old Park chapel. Yet with hope that the interest & exigencies of a new enterprise might find out all that was in you and ready to break forth and respond to adequate demand. Take heart & lead on: it is time for great

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thought to pass into strong action.

With kindest remembrance to Mrs. Davis from my daughters & myself. I remain  
always,

Yours affectionately,

James Martineau (signed)

The Polchar,  
Rothiemurchus,  
Aviemore N.B.

Aug. 22. 1894

My dear Mr. Davis,

The doctrine which I describe in the words "merely represented by a foreign & resembling being", and wish to exclude as antithetic to the personal life of God in the soul of Jesus Christ, is that of either Arian or Unitarian who regards Jesus as a creature of this or that species, - angel or man, - set up for himself with self-moving faculties "in the image of God," - a miniature of God, - on a larger or a smaller scale, but with no blending or interchange of consciousness. This conception gives rise to such writings as Dr. Priestley's sermon on Divine Influence, separating the life of Man from that of God, even in its spiritual relations; and involves the necessity, in order to convey the Divine into the Human, of special irruptions of inspiration or other miraculous intervention in the scheme of the world's history. The difference between this view and that which I commend in the passage cited, is illustrated by the title which I remember writing on the outside of an early sermon "The Imitation of God the Inspiration of Christ". I should now express what I mean by saying "Christ the supreme example & revealer of the Immanence of God in the Human Conscience".

I thank you heartily for the offer of two Vols on Sam<sup>l</sup> Longfellow. But I fear that, with what I have at present upon me in the way of reading and writing, they would remain unopened. But I shall not forget to procure them for myself, if & when the time comes for me to enjoy them.

Heartily wishing you a delightful trip and safe return with refreshed energies and imagination enriched with pictures grand & lovely,

I remain, always,  
Affectionately Yours,  
James Martineau (signed)



35, Gordon Square,

London. W.C.

Mar. 5. 1897

My dear Mr. Davis,

While adhering to my statement of the Christian origin and meaning of the word "Church", I do not call in question the extension of its use to analogous "assemblies" that were not "the Lord's"; nor have I the least desire to withhold partnership in it from any associated "worshippers of the Living God". I need not say that I am myself in far closer fellowship with such friends as Francis Newman and Miss Cobbe than with the majority of the clergy whom I meet at the monthly discussions of the Zion College. It is not therefore from any defective appreciation of a simply theistic piety that, while welcoming its efficacy in gathering a sacred ἐκκλησία I miss in the product the feature essential to constitute a "Church" κοινότης Church-history is the history of organised Christianity. Even to the parent: Judaism the word is never applied and does not appear in the Old Testament. It was born with the Christian literature, and finds its meaning exclusively in Christian institutions.

If, Mr. Voysey, regardless of this usage, choose to call his place of worship the "Theistic Church", I see no objection to the innovation beyond the inconvenience caused by every loss of precision in the use of terms. And I look with cordial sympathy & satisfaction on his successful efforts to sustain the religious life in the increasing number of conscientious people to whom the usual Church & Chapel services do not speak.

But when you draw the inference that his administration of religion and ours, because each adequate to the needs of those who resort to them respectively, should become co-partners under the same category and form one ecclesiastical denomination, I cannot accept your conclusion. The theist who rejects the spiritual authority and personal religious teaching of Christ will necessarily have to justify his dissentient position; and the theist

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who owes his access to the living God to the very source thus rejected and disclaimed, cannot possibly realise the conditions of fellowship in worship, in teaching, and in modes of dutiful life. Their sympathies will be more often in conflict than those of Catholic & Protestant or of Churchman & Dissenter.

But the question, of the range of possible union is not one of thought & feeling alone. It is subject to practical limits determined by law. We cannot autocratically settle what to do and what not to do, with our Chapels & endowments. This is predetermined by Wills & Trust-deeds, of which we, of the present generation, are but administrators. As life-trustees, our duties and possibilities are defined for us in testamentary & statutory documents. The conditions thus imposed on the Trustees by the Founders are, it is true, exceptionally liberal, dictating no selected variety of Christian theology as obligatory on the beneficiaries. But the forms of expression employed, invariably assume discipleship to Christ and keep within the limits of a Gospel exegesis. This is no matter of doubtful inference; but from the time of Baxter downwards is directly affirmed with the utmost emphasis. The measure of latitude claimed & approved by our forerunners & handed down in the places of Worship which they dedicated, is thus defined by Dr. John Taylor at the opening of the Norwich Octagon Chapel in 1756:

"We are Christians, & only Christians, & we consider all our fellow Protestants of every denomination in the same light, only as Christians, & cordially embrace them all in affection and charity as such. Whatever peculiar tenets they may hold, & in what respects soever they may differ from us, such tenets & such difference we consider not as affecting their Christian character & profession in general" - "This chapel we have erected, & here we intend to worship the living & true God, through one Mediator Jesus Christ; not in opposition to, but in perfect peace & harmony with all our fellow-Protestants. This edifice is founded upon no party principles or tenets, but is built on purpose & with this very design, to

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keep ourselves clear from them all; to discharge ourselves from all the prejudices & fetters in which any of them may be held: that so we may exercise the public duties of religion upon the most Catholic & charitable foundation, according to the rules & spirit of genuine Christianity, as taught, & established by our Lord & his inspired Apostles; & that, upon this enlarged ground, we may be quite free to search the Scriptures, to discover, correct & reform, at any time, our own mistakes & deficiencies, & at liberty to exercise communion with any of our Christian brethren. This is our present sense and spirit, & I hope it will always be so."

Federal Union may well be wider than this, - for social philanthropies prosecuted in common, which are untouched by irremovable theological differences; as I trust a not-distant future may prove. But spiritual union for the entire sanctification of life I hold to be incompatible with such differences as separate Christian from non-Christian. Deeply as I reverence & love Francis Newman, I could not but feel my Sunday worship hurt and spoiled by the painful comments it would be his duty to make on the Christian controversy as conceived by him, from any pulpit which he might occupy. I could not wish him to be silent, when conscience bids him speak. But I could not help wishing him and his people in a place of audience apart, where the conditions of religious fellowship need not fail. As a hearer of such criticisms as find favour with the Deistical school of preachers and writers, I should gladly concede to them entire freedom and opportunity of expression, provided it was not obtruded upon ears waiting for lessons of more sympathetic tone.

That a spiritual theist such as you describe may be personally qualified for the duties of a minister and perform them effectually for a likeminded congregation I do not for a moment doubt; & this seems to me the only thing for which you contend. My position is that, if (by Triennial Meeting or otherwise) we are to have an organised Church, identical with that whose chapels &c we inherit, it must continue to be Christian; else the identity

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is lost, and inheritance is forfeited.

Excuse my prolixity and

Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

James Martineau (signed)

35, Gordon Square,

London, W.C.

Mar. 29. 1897

Dear Mr. Davis,

I unreservedly give to the right of private judgment & the openness to fellowship all the range which you claim for them under the phrase "willing surrender to the living God"; and even more: for I extend them also to the Agnostic & the Atheist. And yet I gather from this no warrant for your judgment on young Mr. Voysey's case.

He desires recognition as a Minister in our Church. "A Church" is distinctively a Christian institution, - an assembly of the "multitude of them who believe and are of one heart". Its sacred offices are sought by one who declines the Christian belief & the Christian name. What answer can he expect from the certifying authority whose testimony he seeks? If he himself, being frank & open, has told his whole story from the pulpit for which he is a candidate; his conscience is clear, but not without involving the congregation before him in a new problem. Can they appoint him as their Pastor, without changing the ecclesiastic position? Does it not amount to an abandonment of Christianity, and a lapse into simple Theism? If so, he may be a Jew, a Moslem, a Buddhist, each of which is a believer in one God. Are the synagogue, the mosque, the Chinese temple, to appear in our Year-book, as places of the same worship as ours? To this there would be no objection, if it were true that "the foundation on which we rest" is "that we are members of Free Churches", so as to affirm nothing and commit ourselves to nothing by belonging to them. But this is not true. The very word "Church" itself tells the story of its origin & significance. The *ἐκκλησία κυριακή* is the gathering together of the Lord's disciples, and denotes nothing either before or beyond the range of his community. The components of "a Church" are ipso facto "Christians".

And so must they be, if they are "Unitarians". For what is the

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"Unity" emphasized by that word? and what the plurality excluded? Not that of the Godhead, so that all others, if not Atheists, are Polytheists: but that of the Personality within the Godhead, regarded by us a unit coextensive with the whole; but by others as a triplicity making-up the whole without prejudice to its Divine singleness. Hence the Trinitarian invariably claims to be no less monotheistic than we are; and justly resents our tendency to confound his 3 ὑποστάσεις with separate Divine Agents. We have certainly no right to say or to imply that because he is not Unitarian, he must be a polytheist.

In my judgment therefore the class "Unitarian" is simply a subdivision of the higher class "Christian"; and no one who knows what he is about can claim the former while disclaiming the latter. This logical conclusion is welcome to me on deeper moral grounds. The Jesus Christ who meets me when I critically reach the assured historic reality of his life & teaching, is and says all that I believe & venerate of the relation between the human soul & the Divine Inspirer of it; and reveals it to me, as I could never have thought it for and of myself, I cannot part with this ideal: without it, the lights of conscience would burn fainter & fainter & soon go out. I do not for a moment blame or judge those who feel otherwise & can walk alone. But for myself, I am dependent and must lean on something higher. And after all my seeking, I come back with the thought, "Lord, to whom should I go: Thou hast the words of eternal life".

Affectionately Yours

James Martineau (signed)

7 Park Village East, Regents Park

April 17/47

My dear Martineau

I have long delayed writing to express to you the sad pleasure I felt in reading your sermon on Ireland. I had only a little before been talking over with my friend Price of Rugby one of the points which you bring out into just prominence, (and which I had too much buried in other matter in my article) the serious evils arising from assimilating Irish political organization to that of England. I suppose it is impossible now to bring any direct remedy for that!

I believe the misery of the tenants is already beginning the ruin of middlemen. I have under my eyes the case of a middleman whom the headland-lord is summarily ejecting, because he cannot get the rents paid: & I suppose this must be common. It is the species of suffering w<sup>ch</sup> perhaps least need sympathy, tho' the individuals may be (as in this case) blameless. If the new measure brings ruin on landlords, might not the Chancellor of the Exchequer buy up all estates which were going to be sold at an undue depreciation, & after paying off mortgagees & redeeming underlettings, resell the estates without loss? Three or four millions would go a great way in this work.

I lately met Thomas Carlyle, & was exceedingly grieved at his talk. I fear to say all I felt & thought: this only, that he rants out his threadbare hobbies & most questionable opinions, without letting any body else speak, if he can help it, or attending to what they do say. It has made me once more feel what has been many times strongly impressed on me, that a certain forward school of this day is engaged in not merely apologizing for, but extolling the persecutions of past ages. I cannot but think that the common sense of young persons & all ordinary people dictated to them, 3, 4, 5 centuries ago, as now, what a shocking & wicked thing religious persecution was; and it was not until men had hardened their hearts by the false philosophy which taught the duty of enforcing Unity by the sword, or by the lust of power which

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cared nothing at all for duty, - that they were braced up to persecution. I used to argue with Sterling against his esteeming the actors more highly than the sufferers of persecution, when the former were men of genius & generally well intentioned: but this seems to be magnified in Carlyle to a horrid pitch. It makes me glad to see that Micholet in his "French Revolution" is again at work to exhibit the monstrosities of those old days: for I have feared that in the reaction against the onesidedness of "Fox's book of Martyrs" persons will consent to leave off hating the abominations committed; - by what parties, matters not.

I have nearly finished an important work, at which I look with trembling, on the Hebrew Monarchy. I cannot help telling you, although it will be anonymous, & I desire it not to be authoritatively known that I am the author: though I cannot expect not to be detected.

Pray give my warm regards to Mrs. M & to all the children

Ever your affectionate F W Newman



Oct. /47

7 Park Village East

Regents Park

My dear Martineau

I cannot refrain from writing to express the delight & instruction I have had in reading some of your new volume of Sermons. I am in danger of glutting myself by too large a meal, & have resolutely put the book aside as an act of selfdenial after reading perhaps one half of it in two days. It is a delightful information that you give in the Preface, of having had communications from persons of various opinions yet sympathising in spiritual sentiment, and gives me to hope that the faithful words which you have spoken to a select few shall find a meditative consideration with many. If they are but read, no amount of prejudice & bigotry will avail with hearts at bottom pure & loving to hinder them from prizing your "lyrical effusions", on topics so momentous, & with discernment & vigour so rare. I thank you for calling your Sermons lyrical; as it solves a difficulty which I have felt. The poetry of them I have myself thought occasionally overdone; and once I was ashamed, when a depreciator attacked the first volume sharply on this head, that I had so little to say, and was almost silenced, as though I was myself in bad taste to admire them as I did. I shall in future boldly claim them as didactic poetry; for such they are, though without metre. Your remark on preaching without book was new to me, and at first striking. On further thought, I cannot quite adopt your view. I doubt whether the reformed preaching was characteristically what you describe it, as opposed to the catholic homily; & rather suspect that such reformed divines as have had catholic leanings (as Jeremy Taylor) and the most esteemed Catholic preachers, as Chrysostom, Morsillon, Fenelon, have come nearer to your ideal than the more downright reformers, as Luther, Latimer, Owen, Knox. But I am very little versed in Sermon Literature. Is not however the pervading fact this, that the reformed preaching was addressed to the understanding & was very argumentative; and that using a book characterized High Church divines until the Revolution, after which it became general in England? The Hymns of Puritans,

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Low Church and Continental Reformers, being eminently addressed to the affections, seem to me a sort of supplement to the too argumentative sermon.

I am disposed to say, that as popular lectures usefully introduce a new science, so preaching without book is best for the irreligious & ignorant; but to those who have made progress in holy affection & long after greater advances, (for whom therefore a higher spiritual culture is essential,) the written sermon is far more profitable. But our Evangelicals go round like a Squirrel in a cage; & however actively they step, rise not an inch higher. It is shocking to hear many boast that they hold fast to the precise round of doctrine which they received on their first conversion; as if perfection consisted in receiving no new light.

Much of your discourse cuts deep into the conscience like the dissector's knife; & if here and there I hesitate to agree, I am too afraid that it is from a deficiency in the depth of my own experience to make me ready to voice it. But when you touch on what is purely historical and call out my critical judgment, I cannot help feeling now & then that your views are rather a bridge to aid timid persons over a chasm, than anything which can be permanently believed. Am I to illustrate this? I will take your deeply touching & awakening sermon on the Sorrow with Downcast Look; all of which flows beautifully out of your text, if the common interpretation be conceded, and does not depend for its truth on any text. Yet I cannot in a candid exegesis, put aside the question of the reasonableness of the thing commanded to the rich young man. You hint that political economists will declare it unreasonable: - but will not moralists also? Had Jesus any right, of his own mere notion, to lay a special duty on that youth which is no duty at all to other men? and is it, or can it be, a duty to all? To me, I confess, it appears a wholly unreasonable precept. If, desiring religious instruction, and hoping for it from you, I were to ask you what I ought to do, & you were to lay on me such a charge, I am conscious that I too should go away sadly disappointed just in proportion to my previous high expectations from you. I should not merely want energy of Will to execute it, but conviction of Understanding that

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it would be wise or right; and if I exceedingly revered your judgment, this would make me doubt my own. Thus I should have no ease, until I either executed a deed in dependence on you, to which my own conscience did not respond, or sadly came to the conclusion that you had in you too strong a dash of fanaticism to make you a very safe moral adviser. This appears to me the legitimate explanation of the young man's sorrow. No doubt this plunges us deep at once into very serious considerations: but you are not one to bid us hide our heads in the sand & avoid seeing what is disagreeable or pulling down our prepossessions. We are from childhood reared in the belief of the absolute moral wisdom of all Christ's precepts, & while we hold them to be true on the faith of sensible miracles, it is possible to subject the understanding to them & smother doubt as a duty. I did so for many a year, but have not dared it since I saw clearly that miracles cannot be our foundation: & now, the longer & the more calmly I have meditated upon it, the more certain it seems to me that his wisdom was any thing but absolute, & that a mischievous element was entangled in his teaching, as truly as in Paul's, Luther's or Wesley's. As we have not his own writings, we cannot criticize so closely; but we have on the matter before us a marked coincidence of testimony -

(1) He himself abandoned his own craft, & his worldly substance; (2) he ordered Peter, John & their two brothers to do the same, & they obeyed; (3) he solemnly promised them as a reward that they should receive land & houses now in this time a hundred fold, & in the world to come eternal life. Mark x. 28,30. This was in sequel to his precept under consideration.

(4) he lays down as a general dogma that if a man forsake not all that he hath, he cannot be his disciple. (This must be interpreted by the actual conduct of Peter &c, which he so emphatically approved.) (5) He ordered men to "follow him", & would not accept their obedience if they so much as buried a dead father or took farewell of their relatives. (6) Among the first disciples at Jerusalem, this precept was obeyed with peculiar zeal, - the renunciation of their worldly good. - A little experience showed the mischief of it, and the apostles appear to have become wiser than their Master: but

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I cannot evade the conviction, that he taught that literally, which no one can now teach without being deemed fanatical. I have myself had a bitter experience on this matter. There is no .....

[I have cut off the end of my letter, fearing to obtrude my personal life & past conduct unbecomingly. Suffice it to add, that in my retrospect of much in my own conduct which now pains me greatly, I deliberately think that I was led astray by simplehearted & blind obedience to certain precepts of Christ. I also know other individuals with whom it has been the same, to their acute suffering. Many of his harsh commands (generally explained as hyperbolical) now appear to me to be snakes for simplesouls. In the case of the rich young man, he appears first to have replied as a common Jew or Pharisee would have done; (a reply, which Paul would have judged of eminently selfrighteous tendency;) but when farther pressed, he sustained his pretensions to preeminent wisdom by plunging into a demand which he knew would stop the inquirer's mouth. I fear this will seem quite profane: may the good Lord enlighten us: but I cannot get rid of the conviction that when Jesus offered to build again the temple in 3 days if the Jews would destroy it, he was similarly evading the disagreeable demand of a sign. In short, on what evidence of fact does the absolute sanctity and superiority to all human weakness ascribed to him, rest? I find it still harder to answer this, than to answer your question how we are to know the writers to be infallible: for the writings are before us, his character we know by the report of men who saw it through a glorified medium, selected the good, suppressed or garbled the bad.

But I have written too much: forgive me; & believe that I am

Ever your Affectionate

Francis W Newman (signed)

P.S. My warm regards to Mrs. Martineau

[no address]

Nov 15/47

My dear Martineau

I do not think you quite understand some of my strictures. We are not concerned with the question whether a certain historical character is a good man, a great man, an excellent & admirable man; but whether he is the perfect moral image of God. Now the slightest falling short of our highest idea of perfection is fatal to the latter claim. Allowances cannot be made for human infirmity and for the darkness of the age, when it is alledged that he was superior to all infirmity and an absolute pattern for all ages. To me it appears that if it be conceded that he was not absolute in wisdom, it follows as a certainty that he cannot have been absolute in moral perfection nor a safe model for uncriticizing reverence. Nay more, from the day that I lost confidence in his superhuman dignity, (I mean, saw that the Arian scheme was as untenable as the Trinitarian,) I at once passed to the belief that he was no Lord & Master for me, but, however wise & good as a man, still an erring and imperfect as well as frail creature. The apriori improbability of the assertion that a man, born of men in the common way, is the visible image of the invisible God, is so intense, that nothing but overwhelming positive testimony could demonstrate it: & I do not feel able to conceive what could be strong enough to prove it. Certainly no historical picture, however faultless; but the more faultless it seemed, the more it would appear certainly due to the fondness of the biographers, only that it may be said with truth, that external faultlessness to the eye of man is no proof of real perfection. It seems to me a mischievous idolatry to hold up as a model for religious reverential contemplation the life of an imperfect being: Unless I hold it to be absolutely perfect, what right have I to mould my own or my child's heart upon it? I think then that the orthodox theory rightly associates the ideas of a superhuman (angelic or divine) origin of the soul of Jesus, & his pretensions to be the pattern Man: his absolute wisdom also seems an essential postulate for acknowledging him as emphatically & exclusively our

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Teacher. God forbid that I should prostrate myself to a fellowman, & call myself by his name, as his δούλος or name him my πατήρ when I think him in some things to be less wise than I (now) am: and so far from trying to bring up a child on this mould, in hope of hitting a meanpoint between adoration & neglect, when the whole current of opinion is to the former, I think the only safe way is to break down & burn the idol, until the idolatry shall have past by. A future age may revere without danger of idolatry: this is very hard for the present age.

If it be true that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah (or the great great Prophet, who speaks the words of God authoritatively & exclusively) the picture of him has been so distorted that I cannot tell what to trust of him as historical, & look on him as a visionary character.

I have never yet read Strauss, but I am beginning. - Young Tayler is bracketed with another as first in the L U honour list -

Believe me

Ever your affectionate

F W Newman (signed)

Sunday Dec 5/47

7 Park Village East

My dear Martineau

I have had much pleasure in thinking over those topics of your letter of Nov 27th which I purposely left unnoticed in my last. I do not think that I have troubled you to write them for nothing; & yet the fear that I may add some new burthen of reply a little damps my readiness to let you know my thoughts in turn. While to hear from you, & especially on such subjects, is always a treat, I must specially beg that you will not think it requisite to write: and that you will believe, when I say, that I shall impute silence to no cause but your numerous duties. To me Sunday brings scarcely any new duties: to you it is any thing but a day of rest.

You hold that "our highest in morals is always copied from actual examples, & is not, like an ideal in mere art, a pure imaginary creation." - I do not see that our highest moral ideal need be an individual person. We see in those around us, who are by no means always our moral superiors on the whole, special points in which each separately excels: and each, in so far, reproves or awakens our conscience, & stimulates to advancement. I am many times reproved & admonished by the dog whom I caress one hour & beat the next. Were it not so, I see not how those highest minds, which come in contact with nothing human that is higher, - a Jesus in your view of him, - or a Socrates perhaps, - could have any spring of improvement at all, without a violation of the laws of human nature: a violation, which, on your view or indeed partly on mine also, would be fatal to the efficacy of Christ's example as a stimulus or reproof. I think that infancy & manhood differ morally in this very respect, that the infant, like the brute, is naturally and necessarily an idolater, making the will & conscience of the individual who is put over it the measure of right & wrong, and unable to rise by mental effort above what is presented to it. But the adult mind looks abroad on men at large, & picks out excellency from every side of it; then from these materials compacts an ideal, higher than any thing which has ever

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been actually seen; and worships that ideal as God. Whether in this process the mind ever invents, I am not able to assert: it is a hard question of metaphysics. Yet I see no apriori difficulty in passing towards an imaginary limit, without altering qualities: just as Hume allows, that if a person is shown a series of shades of blue with one term deficient, though he may never have seen the missing shade, the mind may invent it. I am however equally uncertain as to the inventive power of the sculptor or painter, except so far as dreaming a flattering likeness is invention. (This, I call, passing to the limit.) But it always appears to me that the portraits of females are <sup>\*</sup>generally very superior to ideal paintings, in combined intelligence & beauty; & when I learn that sculptors with greater experience become more & more dependent on living models, it tends to confirm my notion that invention does not vary much even here. \*I have said, of females. Perhaps on the Mediterranean I might say the same of men; but our men are deficient in beauty, I believe, as compared to other latitudes.

The growth of morality appears to me to be at first instinctive & natural, not under the dominion of conscience and thought. As obedience & faithfulness in the dog, as simplicity in the child, as fond loyalty in an old servant, as tenderness & passionate devotion in a mother, so each separate virtue at first springs up as a wild plant. It is what Aristotle calls  $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta}$  not  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$  and depends on special capacities or tendencies of individuals. It is not  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$  because it is under no guidance of conscience, and therefore does not imply a generally virtuous state of soul. Nevertheless it affords a pattern & stimulus to the awakened conscience, which finds "sermons in stones & good in everything". Nor do I see any future stagnation of virtue to be feared from a want of pattern men. The prolific powers of our moral nature rather increase than lessen by cultivation; and new enthusiastic instincts are developed as time goes on. Such are the reasons why I do not feel that I need an individual Model Man to stimulate me: but if I did need one, I think I must look for him within the beat of my daily life & not in the pages of a book. For the book speaks coldly and indirectly, in



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comparison to the living man. It generally needs a sensitive heart, full of goodness, to interpret it. To come to the point, a great deal of the excellence which pious minds see in Christ is a hue of their own, I think, super-added to the narrative, or at least only one of several possible interpretations. The greater part of his life appears to me singularly unfitted to be an example to us. He was a carpenter; he left his trade, & wandered about, living on the substance of others: - it would be positively wrong in me to do the same. He fiercely attacked the rulers of his land, in language calculated to excite the multitude against them: this must not be imitated. But we must imitate the spirit in which he did these things? True: but the spirit is not down in the narrative: it comes out of the piety of the reader's own heart. How much more advantageous for children would a purely domestic pattern be! If I had a daughter, I should, I think, much more value for her a narrative of my own mother's life. That she had faults, especially of omission, I am sure, because she was a human being; but I cannot charge my memory with a single fault of commission: and if I could write her life, I think it would be, as far as facts go, far more profitable than the eccentric virtues, if virtues they so certainly always were, of Jesus of Nazareth. As far as the telling of the story went, I of course might make a great daub of it, far worse a one than the Evangelists.

Did you ever read the life of Fletcher of Madeley, and of his wife, erst Miss Bosanquet? I never read the latter, who I am told was a fit mate for him; but Fletcher himself, in his biographer's tale, appears as a perfect man, - though no one would listen for a moment to the idea that on that account it might be allowable to select him as our model and to preach that he is the moral image of God. To do this on the bare ground that I had never formed any higher idea of goodness would seem to me running the risk of setting men astray through my own want of discernment in regard to his imperfections. Besides, why am I to imagine this limited sort of perfection (which does not affect to be absolute, but is relative to my own dim-sightedness) to be unique or even rare? The philanthropist Howard has perhaps wrought as

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great a work on English morals as any individual of past ages on the world; and seeing his character from a distance, we may readily believe it to be faultless. If any one think living models of goodness to be very rare or not to exist, the obvious reason is that when we are brought into real contact with men we see their faults as well as their excellencies more vividly. Book-heroes are more shadowy and less urgent stimulants to emulation, yet easier to be invested with theoretic perfection.

I think we may become in a certain way patterns to ourselves so far as the pattern is wanted for stimulus. Youth is the season of impulse; & our virtues then have more of the raciness of instinct, with its crudity however. When I look back on my own narrow past, I often have to remember with a sigh, & to struggle to regain from a higher level, the enthusiastic selfdevotion which then through my ignorance & selfconfidence (hidden under the name of Faith) led me into absurd, dangerous & hurtful positions. As we are able to know ourselves so intimately, (if we only desire that knowledge in simplicity & are not encumbered with an imaginary need of self-justification,) I am inclined to believe that such a retrospect in mature life is allowed us with special advantage for cultivating those fruits προαίρετικῶς for which we are best adapted φυσικῶς Such qualities as do not arise in us naturally need aid from observation of others; but to be eminent in these is, I suppose, given to few.

I agree with you, & with the Unitarians in general, that to believe the physical soul of Jesus to be divine or angelic lessens the obligation on the conscience to be as pure & selfdenying as his; yet to me who needs no obligation, but longs to be aided onward, it does not diminish the value of his example, regarded as a means of enlightening the mind to holiness in detail, & showing it what God loves here & will approve hereafter & for ever. What I urged was, that unless I believe in his suprahuman origin & structure, the apriori certainty that he was imperfect weighs down all imaginary evidence on the other side. Nor can I evade this by distinguishing between his attaining absolute perfection and his absolutely obeying his own highest

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ideal. No man, I believe, ever did even the latter. The highest saints whose secret confessions we know, are full of sad selfhiding or even of bitter remorse; nor if we heard reported of any one (say a Wesleyan perfectionist) that he know not what selfreproach meant & needed no repentance, should we for an instant infer that perhaps his obedience to his conscience was absolute. On the contrary we should unhesitatingly impute it to a want of self-knowledge. It is then a probability so cogent, that only the most direct & overwhelming proof could set it aside, that Jesus, like other good men groaned under the weakness of his spirit, and was often in arrears to his conscience, although we have not his confessions as Paul's. Of course I do not think less highly of Paul for it, since the strength of perception will cause the painful phenomenon as well as weakness of will. To use your own beautiful "vanishing period of systole and diastole" illustration of angelic nature, it only proves him to be a man & not an angel. But I think the Xtian Scriptures consistently aim at establishing a difference in kind between Christ & Paul, as though the former could not have confessed himself a sinner. And this is what all hearers understand to be meant by "moral image &c".

I fear it is impossible for two minds to compare their views concerning the faultlessness of the picture of Jesus, unless the accuracy of the painters be conceded. Taking their word without criticizing its truth, I find a great deal which I scruple to call faultless. If I am to strip off all that is harsh, presumptuous, dogmatic & \*\*suggestive of insincerity, of course some other reason is needed for this than a desire to explain away his failings; & I do not deny that that can often be found. But I then find little or nothing left to make a historical picture out of. Suppose that Jesus did not hold himself to be the Messiah, nor the supreme Teacher whom it was a sin to disobey or to argue with, nor the Judge of quick & dead; that he did not jangle enigmatically with Nicodemus & the Jews at Jerusalem; did not call the Pharisees serpents & generations of vipers destined for hell, fools and blind &c &c, did not pronounce damnation for intellectual unbelief, did not

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call on men to follow Him, believe on Him; did not believe that he had power to work miracles; ..... what is left? All that I know is that he preached a series of parables, some very like another, a few very touching, but none of them wise beyond Bunyan's wisdom; that he delivered many precepts more or less striking & beautiful, such as are collected in the Sermon on the Mount & in Luke's peculiar discourses; that he frightened the rulers by his influence over the people & his invectives against them, until their enmity cruelly put him to death. Such an outline of a man makes it right to honour his memory, as that of Alfred the Great or St Louis; but gives us no more to imitate than do the lives of those two kings; for royal life does not differ from ours more than that of Jesus did. See his conduct to his mother & brothers: surely that is no pattern to us.

\*\* By suggestive of insincerity I mean, the juggling language when asked for a sign &c. It is never possible to get a distinct idea whether miracles are to go for anything or not. The obvious long & short is this: "Believe me, if you will, without miracles; else, believe on the hearsay of miracles; but do not demand miracles to be so performed to you that there may be no mistake." I have difficulty in thinking that so complicated a web could be the invention of the biographers, & I incline to believe that his pretensions really involved him in evasions, the enthusiast (as usual) turning into the fanatic. But on all these difficult points of criticism I am very liable to err.

Now forgive this long talk - & with kindest remembrances to Mrs M.

believe me

Your attached friend

Francis W Newman (signed)

7 Park Village East R P

Sept 28/48

My dear Martineau

I enclose introductions to Ewald & Tafel at Tubingen. The latter is the one to care for your temporalities, the former for your spiritualities. They will give you any other introductions you wish. Nicholson writes in high praise of Tubingen, and only fears he is too partial to it, though he allows that the houses in the actual town are not new, modern, airy, the street wide, clean, &c. .... but there are high situations, every way agreeable; and he begs me to add that his wife joins in high commendation of the place. He says you will find all your 4 desiderata in it. The philosophy, he believes, is particularly well filled with liberal varieties of schools. He doubts whether you will be able to get furnished lodgings: but at any rate you will be able to do what he did, - hire furniture. The Semester in 1840 began on the 25th of October. He advises to drive to the Inn die Krone. It is outside of the town, & a good place to stay at until you fix your abode. Tafel will aid you as to the Library, as well as lodgings. Nicholson however is chiefly in hope that you will form Ewald's friendship, for he says, "it would do Ewald good to know such an Englishman."

Morell is a wanderer, as Inspector of Schools, & I never know how to address him, nor indeed do I exactly know how to find out. He has given up his house. I do not believe that he has ever been at Tubingen.

Your welcome letter came here while I was still in Devonshire, where I have been 2 months. It was sent after me & missed me, & at length came back here. I wrote at once to Nicholson, but then I had again to go into Surry about the Sterlings, & this disabled me from sending on N.'s letters without loss of a post. I fear that time is just now precious to you. - I sent the letter to Miss Smith the same day.

I believe you know that Miss Isabella Rankin is with the Sterlings. She  
(Perhaps I need not say that)  
asked after you with the deepest interest, & told me of an event which has before now touched your heart, though your letter to me carried no symbol of

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mourning. I remember I once saw your beloved parent, & with how much sweetness she bore her most severe deprivation. Until we have lost such a one, we do not know how sacred every remembrance will be.

Thank Mrs M. for her kind thoughts of me. I am (sensibly) very well as long as I abstain from exertion of body or mind; I look fat in face (& am complimented!) after 2 months of change & country air; but I cannot walk a mile too much, or compose half an hour too long, without unpleasant reminiscences. I think however that I can lie on my left side with less discomfort.

I have scarcely seen newspapers in Devonshire, & I believe there has been little to know. There is chronic disaffection in Ireland, & a more & more plainly avowed claim to the soil by the peasantry in some parts. The English seem to me to feel there is something wrong at home; to be dissatisfied with all men and all measures, & not to know what they want. Things are fermenting until a measure is suggested which can give hope of amelioration. Of religious movements I recently know nothing. My own studies are entirely in Roman Constitutional History of late. Your letter was highly interesting. I am shocked to hear that an Atheistical party is so strong in Germany. Perhaps the émente at Frankfort, so crushed, will do good?

With kindest regards to all,

I am Ever yours,

F.W.N.

Feb 26/49

7 PVE - RP -

My dear Martineau,

Your account of your daughter's illness & recovery is deeply touching. I always feel what a mutilated man I am, in a spiritual sense, from not having children. By it I evade so much sorrow & lose so much joy, that I seem to lose half the depths of human nature, & to be most imperfectly able to sympathize. Did it ever strike you forcibly how great a defect it was in the Greek notion of Virtue, that they did not see how essential Sorrow is to it? I am sure it must. The desire of *αὐταρκεία* for the virtuous man seems to have been their great snare: hence he was wrong to love too much what he might easily lose - Selfishness was *αὐταρκεύστατον* - *μία γὰρ ψυχὴ τῆς δ' ὑπερλήγει, μέτριον ἄχθος*. However, I believe the poets had far truer hearts here than the philosophers. And perhaps everywhere! But see, I am led off, without expressing my warm congratulations to you & Mrs Martineau on this mercy. My heart insists on taking all these things as mercies; but my philosophy here halts: I most imperfectly make it out.

I have just completed a small book, - I do not know whether I named it - of which I feel to have been delivered, as the work of my life! It has given me deep anxiety & high joy in the composing: anxiety, because inevitably I seem to be assuming so high a position & making such high pretensions to holiness. But it seems to me faithlessness to shrink on that account. I call it: "The Soul; her Sorrows & her Aspirations; an Essay towards the Natural History of the soul, as the true basis of Theology". It is a very "experimental" or devotional book, and contains most of the Calvinistic doctrines with a slight change of phraseology; substantially as I have always believed them: and I try to show how they necessarily flow out of first principles discerned by the moral sense, in connection with the experiences of the Soul. You will not agree with me as to my Chapter on the Hopes of Immortality, which is among the tender subjects. I make light

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of all Physical and Metaphysical arguments, & can see nothing but that Hope, which essentially goes along with the Soul's conscious moral union with God. It is with me nearly summed up in Paul's words: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God ---" [This is a spiritual fact, directly felt] - "and if children, then heirs, &c ...". [This is a spiritual argument; and of the weight of it, only the spiritual man can judge; and Love is that which most gives him Insight. But I do not pretend to have attained such Insight, that I can say, "I believe."] The aim of my book is to save the spiritual side of Christianity, though the formal side is clearly incapable of being saved. I do not attempt to prove the latter statement, but clearly state my conviction; and I make a fierce onslaught on learned Evidences, on Theology as it is, on Sabbaths, Ceremonies, compulsory Sermons, Long Prayers, and many other things: so if man's hates will make the book circulate, I think I shall get a reading. The Pantheism of the few and the Sensual Utilitarian of the many, are, I say, evils against which the system of learned Evidences can make no head, and yet, no other Evidences (according to modern philosophy) can prove historical facts 2000 years old. I cut the History, as not Religion, because the Soul is no judge of the former.

We are so egotistical, - at least I am, that I have told you all this. But I thought you would like to know of it. I only hope I did not in my last letter tell you. Chapman is my Publisher. But for my immersion in this, I should have written to you earlier.

I understand from Mr Atkinson that the Andrews scholarship examination is at the beginning of our Session, next October, and that the candidates must have been in the College classes the one year immediately preceding. Russell could be a candidate next October year, not next October. If this is a grievance to you, write & say so, and tell me whether I shall try to bring it before the Council. I am glad you form so good an opinion of Russell's philological talents - His discernment of Latin idiom seemed to me highly satisfactory; and there are few severer tests of aptitude. How



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odd that is! - I have at present a private pupil preparing for Oxford; not a youth of any great talent; he makes great blunders in Greek forms, yet his Greek exercises are in better idiom & more intelligible than his Latin. It almost makes me hate my profession, - the artificiality of the Latin style! I understand that the Slavonic idiom is so like to Latin, that Latin authors are translated with great beauty into Russian, the words falling into the same order.

Did you hear of the death of my good friend that valuable man Dr Prichard? Alas, he overdosed himself!

My dear Martineau, your praise of my linguistic skill might seem sarcastic. I do not understand Welsh or Irish; I only read the Dictionaries through, and find it very interesting! It is 'true. When an entire family of words is seen in mass, it is not difficult to judge whether they are native, & what is the guiding idea that pervades them. Bopp, like Prichard aims to point out primitive connections between Celtic and the Indo German. My object was to show an intrusion of Celtic into Latin. The stronger the grammatical contrast of Celtic & Latin, the stronger my argument. He who wishes to break it down should insist that the Britons of Caesar talked with a grammar nearly like Latin & not like that of modern Wales. - Latham tells me he thinks I have succeeded in throwing the burden of proof on anyone who henceforth shall deny primitive Celts in Italy. (I hold the Sabines to be quasi-Gaels.) But I have been all idle while about my book, & can barely now get back to my own profession. Lord Brougham will not attack me after his repulse, else I can quite imagine his proceeding against me for having "formally renounced our holy religion". If this sells, I may perhaps consent to put my name to the Hebrew Monarchy; for after this, that cannot perhaps do harm to my colleagues. It was impossible not to put my name to this, for a name is wanted to guarantee so many things which I coolly call facts of the soul. Besides an anonymous man cannot "exhort & reprove".

Cobden believes the Public cannot bear to be distracted by two objects at once. He says; you cannot touch the Debt till you have reformed the

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Taxation; & you cannot do the latter, till you have enormously diminished Expenditure: so let us begin with the last. I believe he sincerely keeping the Debt in view. Lord John is reducing expenditure, in order to avert necessity. I believe a great deal of good is likely to come from this parliament; but I am not up to the news of the day - I take a newspaper twice a week, & have no time to think about it much. Price of Rugby says that the revolution going on in Ireland by migrations is such, that if the ministry were energetic, Ireland in ten years time might be the youngest country in Europe - But though the ministry had numerous Cabinet Councils about it all through the autumn, they have not dared to bring in a measure, but have appointed a mixed Parli<sup>y</sup> Commission. It is universally agreed that the Irish Poor Law is a total failure, which will not work, & only plunders good landlords. I always felt certain of this. I shall take interest in hearing the measures of Stein &c &c .....

Have you heard of Morell's book on the Philosophy of Christianity? I heartily agree to all its practical doctrines, and think it likely to prove a great effect on the Independents. Such topics as Inspiration, Revelation, Certitude, seem to me now for the first time treated before the English public systematically & simply, as from a friend anxious to establish. He & I quite unawares have adopted the same tactics, of assaulting the existing views on the side of unspirituality. His friend Dr Nenner, Hebrew Professor, and a very deep thinker, has in hand a work of kindred spirit.

I am not pleased with your study of German philosophy - Latham says the English are too good to follow the Germans, & I think you are - You have quite enough learning as to other men's views - Do follow out your own genius now - You are old enough for it to have taken its shape -

With true affection,

- & kindest salutations to Mrs M.,

I am ever yours

F W Newman (signed)

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P.S. As regards Russell, I feel no doubt of his Philological success; as to the Professorship question, you well know that our insular prejudices put difficulties in the way of promotion to one who does not come from an English University. I think these can only be struggled against by being able to show some actual performance, such as an original monograph written on a new or obscure subject: else, people say: Oh! we cannot judge of the value of German testimonials &c. I should advise Russell to keep in view already the publishing at an early age some original monographs in subjects which interest him; yes, & more than one, if he does not wish too soon to select his final line. At least this occurs to me.

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My dear Martineau,

I hope that the routine of English life has again become natural & easy to you; and that whatever is novel, in connection with your new Chapel (Church? Steeplehouse!!) has already shown its value & uses. I hear your friends, or their architects, have been resolved to "take the shine out" of the Puseyites by the splendour of your ornaments. Poor old church! On the other side they complain that I have tried to rob her of her spiritual glories. Nothing in which she boasts can be identified with the nucleus of her intellectual system! Her suffering must be that of an empire undergoing dismemberment.

Russell perhaps has told you that the Andrews Scholarship was not awarded at all. I suspect that all the regulations will soon be changed. We all disapproved of them from the beginning; (& the Council ought not to have enacted them without consulting us;) but we did not, I believe, exactly foresee this result. We said that it would encourage mediocrity; but we did not see that as each Professor would then give only languid praise in his own department, a total failure in one would be unredeemed & irreparable. I always looked with much dismay to the task of weighing relative merit in things so incommensurable. But that has not this time been our rock of offence. - We want an entire reconsideration of what it is that Scholarships are meant to do: until we are agreed on this, we cannot wisely make our rules.

We have a decently good Senior Class, as far as translating is concerned, & are proceeding steadily with select Satires of Juvenal, including all which the L.N.C. has specified.

I expected to find annexed to my article on Hungary, some note disclaiming editorial responsibility for the sentiments. I hope that the additional page which I inserted while it passed the press, did not seem to

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need such disclaimer. It was suggested to me by the news of the murder of Batthyany & the rest. I fear you will be shocked when I say, I am now distinctly conscious of having become a positive Republican as regards the Continent. If Prussia stood alone, I believe she would work into a Constitutional Monarchy. But the King's refusal to accept the Empire, now known to have been in consequence of a private compact with Austria, is only part of a system. The princes are resolved to act together as an Order; in which process the most bigoted & pretentious always prevails: & it is morally impossible for one to act frankly & honourably towards his people as a Constitutional Sovereign, if he is bondage to the rest. If by any means we could be honourably disentangled from the affairs of Turkey, I again most heartily desire it. Indeed our perfidy towards the unhappy Sicilians, (the certainty of which I have only recently known from reading the original documents,) swallows up all shame concerning Hungary. What excuse or pretext we any longer have for keeping a fleet in the Mediterranean, I cannot conceive.

I am now bothering you by sending a new pamphlet on the National Debt: not quite new for it was in substance written when attacks commenced on my former pamphlet. - I must say, that if I had time, I am increasingly curious about the Prussian peasant proprietors. Banfield, the Pol.<sup>l</sup> Econ.<sup>t</sup>, depicts that measure in quite a new light: as a mere scheme of the government to shift taxation on to the peasants, because the landlords were untaxable; & that it has been most oppressive to the poor in a financial sense, though the sweets of ownership reconciled them to it. Banfield has more novelty and originality than any writer (that I know) since Adam Smith, but his doctrine of Credit frightens me, & his desire to throw the Poor Rates & County Rates on the general Budget of the Empire fairly knocks me down. His one great desire seems to be, to determine Capital to the Soil; & for this, he sweeps off, not feudality only, but all remembrance that we ever were feudal, and (what is far worse, if true) I fear also, all local government. My mind has long been moving in the opposite direction.

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Forgive garrulity.

My kindest regards to Mrs M.

Ever your Affc.

F W Newman (signed)

P.S. I do not want Republics on the Continent, if one can get Constitutional Monarchy: but my intense sorrow over Hungary was because it seemed to make that for ever impossible. Six weeks ago I again began to hope that the King of Prussia would redeem the cause of the kings; but again it looks desperate. He is such a weathercock that no one can trust him. Why? not, I believe, from ill intention, but because the despotic cabinets and the traditionary bad faith of German princedom forms an atmosphere round him that poisons his good sense. We could not get a constitutional monarchy that would work, until we changed the dynasty. The French tried the experiment, & even that was insufficient. The Germans need to change not one dynasty but twenty, before they can have a fair trial; for all the old ones would infect a new one, as Louis Philippe was infected. England is the only country in the world, where a monarchy which had become despotic was again tamed into constitutionalism by internal causes: (is it not?) & England is an island. The rest have not fair play, for the despot from without helps the despot within. But for interference, Hungary would now be free & flourishing. But for interference, Poland w.<sup>d</sup> for 80 years past have been a great Constitutional Monarchy. (Sweden is half an island: Norway never lost her freedom. This case is peculiar also.) As to Germany, now the republicans are the democrats; but let the middle classes despair of Constitutionalism, & the republic will admit its aristocratic element, and probably the same part of society would rule under republicanism when all become republicans, as under Constitutional Monarchy.

However, I most earnestly desire the last, if it is to be had. But if they must choose between Absolutism & Republicanism, then all my sympathies are with Republicanism.

7 PVE

May 12/52

My dear Martineau

Chapman makes me nervous, by talking of stereotyping cheaply my book on the Soul, & begs me to add my last corrections to it. In order to meet objections from very opposite quarters, I am disposed to prefix an introductory Section on the Metaphysics of Morals - No living man is to me so lucid on these subjects as you. How much I owe to you, I do not know; for my habit is to fuse together all that I learn from every quarter - I believe that much which I learned from Aristotle I have only re-learned more clearly from you. But I often am diffident as to my correctness of phraseology, where I have some confidence that I am fundamentally right. I take the liberty of sending for your criticism the new section. It is not so compressed as I wish; but I fear that if I omit all reasons & all illustration, I shall again be misunderstood. Neither your sister nor Mr Holyoake appears to me to have had the least idea what I held or meant on these matters. The latter now admits he had quite misconceived me. His Anti-Theism is wholly built on the doctrine of Necessity; so, I think is the Atkinson-Martineau view. Holyoake believes his view eminently Moral; & I think that to his mind it will really be a practical refutation of his Antitheism, if he can be shown that it is unfavourable to Morals.

I do not pretend to maintain that Law exists as clearly in the domain of Will as elsewhere. (This is his great objection to me.) Am I going too far in my concession? I do not intend to assert that such a sphere is not one for (even) Divine foreknowledge: but neither am I able to assert that it is.

I shall cancel one short section in the book, if I insert this.

Forgive haste - & believe me

Ever yours aff<sup>y</sup>

F W Newman (signed)

To the Editors of the  
Prospective Review

Gentlemen & Dear friends,

Authors are so seldom satisfied with the Reviews of their works, that I am slow to make appeal against Reviewers. If I now ask the indulgence of your inserting this letter, it is chiefly from the fear that my total silence may be interpreted as my acquiescence in unintentional misrepresentations to which you have given currency. That I may as little as possible assume the tone of controversy, I beg to dispense with reference to your pages, while I make the following statements.

1. I never imagined that Cicero & Boethius effected or aided the Reformation under Luther. I received, on the information of current historians, the belief that the study of these two moralists, about the time of Lanfranc, gave the first impulse to improvement from the dark ages. The lesson which I learned from it, was, that the Scripture without profane literature, was not allsufficient to diffuse the highest moral truth; & that Free Learning (or the free study of other things than Scripture,) was essential to give power to the mind & thus make it susceptible of sound moral culture. - This was wholly directed against notions of the Scriptures which the Prospective disowns, as emphatically as I can do.

2. I have not said that christianity has done nothing for women or for slaves; but that its performances have been exaggerated, & are in no respect such as to give cumulative evidence to the theory of supernaturalism. I maintain that in the matter of slavery Mohammedism has the same respectable merit as Christianity; that Bibliolatry once gave an impulse to celibacy, & is still a strong hold of slavery; that if the theory of supernaturalism may take credit from the history of Christendom, it must also accept discredit; that in that history, other influences than those of a purely religious system acted to raise women & to extirpate European slavery. I do not for a moment deny, that the doctrine of the equal value of human souls tends to elevate women, & also to foster democracy; but this doctrine is not



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[undated]

the whole either of actual or of Biblical Christianity. I am fully aware that you separate Christianity from Bibliolatry; but the majority do not & cannot; & when I reason against their system, I do not think I am refuting yours.

3. In ceasing to be a Bibliolater, I am not aware that I cast away "large masses of history". I have written a rather elaborate work on the Hebrew Monarchy, & am blamed by Trinitarians for taking so much trouble, when (say they) I ought to despise the whole. But, I confess, I do not regard the four gospels as history, but as a rather delusive attempt at biography by means of oral tradition or distant memory.

4. I do not believe that the only possible sort of Revelation is a dictating of propositions. I merely hold, that until it assumes this form, it cannot be Authoritative, as perhaps all the Christian world but a very small minority has for 1700 years held it to be - for until then, there is nothing for one man to improve upon the understanding of another; in which I conceive Authority to consist.

5. I have nowhere declared that the Old Testament is "empty of predictions" concerning Messiah, & that such predictions are "non existent". I have on the contrary must pointedly avowed by belief that such predictions do exist, and that the Jews interpreted them on the whole correctly, but that the Christians corrupted their interpretation to make them fit on to Jesus of Nazareth; also, that Jesus claimed to be the "Son of Man" alluded to in Daniel, & the King riding on an Ass, whom Zechariah describes.

6. In admitting & maintaining that religion is a moral & spiritual power, I have never left out of sight that it is liable to be depressed by intellectual errors; nor do I know what line I have ever written, that can suggest it as my opinion that intellectual error can never prove moral imperfection. To my mind, if any one claims to be an infallible teacher, and is not, this proves an arrogant presumption quite inconsistent with absolute moral perfection. Most great reformers have been arrogant & presumptuous, I would not undervalue them on that account, but I would learn to think of them as great

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men & not as gods. I cannot admit that I hold a man's character to be moral deformity, merely because I shrink from it as something incredible & almost profane to ascribe to him absolute moral perfection, and from putting between him & all other men a chasm not to be passed.

If any one deny that Jesus ever spoke the words attributed to him, - in which he claims to be the Son of Man who is to judge living & dead, - & to be the One & only Teacher, to whom all are to bow; - If he deny that Jesus gave the reply concerning the Tribute to Caesar, or laid down the precept to "sell all they had & give to the poor"; - such a person merely illustrates the extreme uncertainty there is, as to what Jesus really taught, & "what he really was", Yet I cannot pretend myself to feel the slightest doubt that he claimed the title "Son of Man", & intended that title to allude to Daniel's prophecy. Nor can I doubt, when I read the early chapters of the Acts, & compare them with the often reiterated precept of religious poverty, that that formed not only a prominent duty in the teachings of Jesus, but the essential mark of discipleship: & I think this to have been a fanatical & mischievous precept.

I purposely refrain from saying more on this whole subject, - the absolute perfection of Jesus.

7. I never said, that, when a boy, I preferred the character of Fletcher to that of Jesus; much less, (as the author of the Eclipse of Faith ridiculously represents,) did I wish others to follow this boyish notion. As a boy, it never occurred to me at all to compare the two characters. In the Phases I referred to my overexalted conception of Fletcher, merely to illustrate how easily those who are untrained in literary criticism take for granted that a beautiful picture is a true picture.

8. I have not pressed the "demonical professions" as refuting the views of Christianity maintained in the Prospective, but as proving against current orthodoxy that the four gospels have serious errors of fact.

9. Against an alledged Revelation of things moral & spiritual I have never

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objected on the ground that it is internal to the recipient: quite the contrary. I maintain every where that this is that Revelation for which we are all to seek, this is that which I believe to have existed in various great saints. But I have added, that this cannot pretend to be Authoritative, as the current theology imagines. We receive from Paul, or from any anonymous writer, whatever we can get of profit, & we need not inquire by what process his ideas were gained.

But if any one profess to have a Revelation of things external, (such as, - that a certain dead man is risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, & about to return with the angels of God, to snatch up his saints to him, burn up the earth, sit in judgment on living & dead &c) - if moreover he claims that we will believe all this on the ground of his alledged Revelation; - then, since this is wholly beyond ordinary & daily experience, we absolutely need to ask details as to the mode & process of the Revelation. If it be internal, I do not say that that in itself condemns it beyond all possibility of establishment; but I hold that until the person has explained how he distinguishes his internal revelation from fancies & reveries, & has convinced us that he has the means of safely distinguishing, his alledged revelation is necessarily worthless to us. Yet I cannot imagine it would at once be more cogent by being avowedly a hearing of the ear.

10. In stating (Phases, p217) that "all evidence for Christianity must be moral evidence", I meant simply, "based on moral considerations"; & the remark is directed against what you regard as a monstrous error, viz. that we are to remodel our notions of right & wrong in order to save the credit of fact.

11. I am amazed at being supposed to demand that religion shall owe nothing to the past, & that each man shall find truth for himself de novo, as if he were the first man. I feel such imputations perfectly wild. In language almost too emphatic I have declared my own obligations to the Scriptures, as also to Christian hymns. I have avowed not only the great value of Teachers,

[undated]

but the essential debt which every human soul owes to its predecessors; that we are all bound up in one common life, imparting & receiving. To start de novo, would be to start as barbarians; of course.

I am so much at a loss to know whence so many critics derive this very absurd imputation, that I am driven to conjecture that it is from my disowning History as not Religion; although I have expressed myself on that subject so carefully, that I do not [know] how I could be misunderstood. I have compared Religion to (a very dissimilar branch of thought) Mathematics, and have remarked that as no one starting de novo could elaborate our modern mathematics, so no one starting de novo, could attain our religious insight. Yet as in Mathematics, so in Religion, we understand and believe by help of our predecessors, but not upon their authority. - So long as we rest on authority, we are in a puerile halftaught state, which is not indeed to be condemned, but is always to be regretted.

When I say that History is not Religion, I mean that it is no less absurd to count among religious truth, the life & death of Jesus, than to count among mathematical truths the life & death of Sir Isaac Newton: and that as it would corrupt Mathematics to introduce a dogma of Newton or a fact of his life in demonstration of a theorem, so it corrupts religion to introduce analogous dogmas or detailed facts into the midst of its arguments. Yet neither this or any word I have written can imply that I have the slightest objection to studying the biography of any man for religious profit. If even it be fictitious, & we mistake it for truth, it may be highly profitable, - provided that we do not make it Authoritative.

12. I do not hold that a bookrevelation is essentially impossible; but a bookrevelation of matters which in their own nature are not susceptible of generalization: also, I hold, that it is immensely harder to discuss the general question of the infallibility of a book, than to judge of ninety nine out of a hundred questions which the book is invoked to solve. But to deduce from this that I am opposed to getting religious profit from a book,

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is a piece of ingenious perversion which ought to have been entirely left  
to the author of the Eclipse of Faith.

I am Respectfully & sincerely yours,

F. W. Newman

[no address]

Oct 29/52

My dear Martineau

Concerning your Review of my Phases I said enough at Pwll y Crochon, & am quite sorry I have been led on to say more; for though your affection is so deep, & generosity so wide, I fear your sensitiveness may be something so intense, that I may be unable to still your pain at the idea that you have committed an injury on me, or that I think you have. I am afraid that explanations are so apt to beget counterexplanations, that a matter which would be easily and rightly forgotten, if we did not talk of it, frets one if we do. I think your affectionate note just received demands a response; but I will try that it shall not be a reply.

If I know any thing of myself, no possible declaration of utter difference from all I think, from friend or opponent or enemy, if such I have, could give me personal pain. In religious questions, are not the dearest separated? Do I not think many of my wife's notions deplorable errors? Does she not think mine to be blasphemous? Have I five friends whose capacity & high attainments I respect, whom I imagine to accede to very important arguments which seem to me of decisive weight concerning the propriety of my calling myself a servant & follower of Jesus? I do not imagine that I have. It does not seem to me under these circumstances any claim of high virtue in me, to say, that I am wholly above or beside (whichever is the word) the possibility of being offended by the strongest expressions of dissent from my arguments or my conclusions. What "aggrieves" or annoys & distresses (not necessarily even then offends) me, is, to have my sentiments & arguments & opinions erroneously stated, so that the reader believes I think or feel what I do not think or feel, or that I rest upon arguments on which I do not rest.

Now of this, my very dear & tenderhearted & conscientious friend, be assured. Your writing against me has not made me think more meanly of your talents & of your insight, nor of your fairness; it has solely aided my

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charity towards others. Perhaps because I once was a Trinitarian &c. I have always resisted the tendency of the clearer thinkers to regard their opponents as unscrupulous & wilful garblers; but it may be that of late years this tendency has grown on me, when I found myself thus treated. But as for you, I so know your noble heart, your upright mind, & your personal affection, that when you also misunderstand me, it has no weight whatever to make me for a moment think you do so on purpose. I see it is the infirmity of human minds, which cannot catch one another's point of view, & by erring in that, misinterpret other things: & I make no doubt, that if I were to endeavour to expound the basis of your creed, I should make blunders which would aggrieve you (as I perhaps have done). When I get the right time and place, I will try to state to the public various matters which I do not hold, & which are ascribed to me right & left: but after all, it matters very little, & I have said too much about all this to you. I have nearly as much love from men as I know how to enjoy. My sorest trials of that sort are beyond being reached by favorable or hostile literature. And if I be made to be thought more of a fool than I am, yet while nobody assails my moral character, it really is not much of a calamity! The North British is at the Hebrew Monarchy in a second article, & again misrepresents me: - apparently lest the former disavowal should too much have blunted their weapon!! But I must not be uncharitable!!

Ever yours most heartily

FWN

Pwll y Cruchon

Aug 11/52

My dear Martineau

As I have already annoyed you by some remarks on your critique of my Phases of Faith, I think it better to repeat it, rather than vex Tayler, about the new review of the Eclipse of Faith. One of the points on which you misunderstood me, has been also misunderstood by the author of that book, & the misunderstanding is repeated & confirmed by the new reviewer. The inaccuracy of this disposes me to explain. It did suggest that the fault might be in my own obscurity; but each time that I again read my paragraph, I find it so very clear, that I do not know how to rest in this. I refer to the passage about Fletcher of Madeley in p210 of the Phases.

You supposed that I was requiring others to admit Fletcher to excel Jesus, on the ground that I took this view; and in fact, because I when a boy regarded him as superior. On the contrary, when a boy, I never even made the comparison, and at present, I do not think it worthwhile to try. Why I? Because I believe the moral life of Fletcher by Benson to be a half-romance. - My argument is, that "Many biographies overdraw the virtues of their subject"; and that since "uncritical readers cannot always discern this", therefore "the uneducated cannot judge on the literary question, 'whether the portrait of Jesus may have been imaginary and unreal.' My illustration is, that I myself, when a boy, judged the character drawn for Fletcher to be perfect; a judgement which, I took for granted, would be regarded as a very silly one; & therefore felt it a proper illustration of the error which the popular mind is liable to, from such a basis of religion; and since Xtianity is an appeal to the popular mind & heart, not to the historicocritical faculties, this appears to me a sufficient objection to such a basis.

My remark, that "if I were now to read the book afresh, I suspect I should think his character a more perfect one than that of Jesus", is worded cautiously on the side on which I now see no caution was needed. Could I have foreseen its enormous misinterpretation, I should have omitted it. I



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solely intended to enforce still farther the sentence (already quoted) which I had put in quotation marks at the head of the paragraph. You & I (for instance) have enough of religious faculty in common, I trust & believe, to be joint worshippers: we have not enough of historical criticism in common to count on intellectual agreement concerning a biography (as perhaps of Fletcher): therefore I cannot believe that such criticism is a fit basis for a popular religion, preached to the poor, & to be judged of by such a verdict as Jesus & the Apostles say.

The reviewer (p410) approves of the writer saying, "When a man so far forgets himself as to say what he can hardly help knowing will be unspeakably painful &c....." It is unspeakably painful to Trinitarians that any of you say that Jesus is not God. It is unspeakably painful to some others that I do not think the character of Jesus to be absolutely perfect. How can we help giving pain, if we do not shut our mouths entirely? If I merely hint at the first glimpses of apparent imperfection which come on me, I am told that my objections are feeble, & (if I do not mistake) I am thought to want courage to say boldly that the character is imperfect; but when I am thought to say it plainly, I am "rightly rebuked" for being so very daring.

The reviewer (p408) says: "We entirely agree with our author in his exposure of the unconscious fallacy, under which, it has always appeared to us, writers of the school of Mr Newman and Mr Parker labour, in testing what the world is, and what achieved truth is, without the assurance of the Biblical Dispensation." Then follows a long quotation in which I am distinctly charged with not being aware what I myself owe to the Bible. I am quite startled that any one can have read my Phases, without knowing how emphatically I have avowed my debt; as in The Soul I have declared our debt; and that Religion, like Mathematics, is traditional & accumulative. I expect such misrepresentation from the orthodox, who, I am persuaded, hate my pages too much to read them consecutively or patiently: but I do not expect to find their imputations of false fact endorsed in the Prospective; which, writing of me as in a friendly way, must seem to the reader quite authorita-

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tive on a matter of fact.

I have a very similar complaint concerning the long quotation in pp406, 407, which the reviewer quotes with approbation, while it is nothing but a tissue of misrepresentation of everything on the subject which I have maintained. It represents somebody to get religious benefit from my writings, & then adduces the fact as relating my view of the absurdity of a book revelation. This is to imply that I hold it impossible to get religious benefit from the Bible, and that I mean that, when I say there cannot be "a book revelation"! Of course I mean what the orthodox mean, when I use this phrase, viz. something authoritative. In one place (I have not the volume with me) I say that "in the region of Spiritual" as transcending to Moral "truths", written law is impossible, because things are not absolutely right or wrong, (as to go to the theatre;) and conditions are infinite in number which may determine the highest course. Unless the passage be referred to by the opponent, I cannot positively define; but I can say positively that I have everywhere maintained the reverse of what he imputes, as to the power of man receiving religious edification & stimulus from written books.

N.B. The writer implies that Mr. Helps is author of the Eclipse of Faith, but I am told it is Mr Rogers of Birmingham.

I feel it very sophistical to talk of "the school of Newman & Parker", especially when dealing with a point on which we two are not agreed: but it matter not: people will do so.

---

I returned yesterday from Fronde's. The weather has been such, that it is well you did not go to Capel Curig; enormous rains, and such floods that we were on Monday 11th as it were drowned & cut off from Beddgelert for 5 hours. The cataract in Fronde's grounds was tremendous.

Fronde is greatly improving, I think, on every point which offended you. He does not disguise a conscious change of mind on many matters. He speaks

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with deep emphasis on the essential contrast of Right & Wrong, as that in which Carlyle & Macaulay & Pantheists are deficient. He alluded to Necis-sarians as if he stood outside of them; but I did not venture to probe him, & am not sure. His Theism is certainly intensified, & altogether, I think he will be a good & great man.

I have this morning got news of my dear old aunt's death. She was 87 last January. I did not expect her to survive last winter. She was my father's sister, & lived in our family as long as we were children. This will finally bring me out of Wales. I shall attend her funeral at Derby, perhaps on Saturday next.

With warm regards to Mrs. Martineau & all your children

I am every your affectionate

Francis W Newman (signed)

7 PVE. RP. May 8/54

My dear Martineau,

I believe you have received, either as for the Prospective or for the Westminster Review, a small volume of mine which Chapman has called Catholic Union; but which I would call the Alliance of Philanthropy. He wanted an excuse for making it one of the "Catholic Series". If you have not a copy in one of these two characters, I will send you a copy. The long & short of the book is this: "Agreement of Theory is the end or goal, but cannot be made the starting place of practical Union. We must start from achieved agreement, i.e. practical morals, & go towards spiritual and metaphysical agreement." I do not think you will broadly differ from this, & yet I have a vague apprehension that you will for clear & strong reasons of detail reject my schemes. I do not know whether to apologize for owing so much to you as I do, which I cannot acknowledge. I seem to myself even to pick up phrases from you, (as, where I talk of current religion being too loftily spiritual to care for earthly wants;) but when I found them slip out unawares, & to be quite the word, I considered, that we all use scripture phrases as common property, & it is an honour, not a fraud, so to appropriate. To quote you every time would be to bore the public with you: yet I thought I would tell you that I am not insensible of my debt, & the depth of your influence on so different a mind as mine is perhaps testified when I unawares use your language.

I have wished to express my obligations to the writer of the article in the new Prospective against the Eclipse of Faith and its Defence. Tayler does not know who the author is. I have a conjecture, but am afraid to tell it. I see that the writer has done me the great honour to read all my books with such care, that he appreciates most accurately my point of view; and this is no easy matter, especially for one who differs from me historically. Since some one must have the last word, & I am unable to write more clearly

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than I have written; I had resolved not to reply again; and indeed it is very disgusting. I marvel at the man who from a sense of duty has volunteered to wade through it. I am chiefly grieved at the conduct of the Eclectic Review, which has now a second Editor, or, I think, would not act as it has done.

I hope you are not dissatisfied or anxious at the progress of the war. I am on the whole very well satisfied. It is a great thing that the Turks make good their defence till the allies come up, & that the allies prove to the Turks their sincerity by the attack on Odessa.

Ever your aff<sup>y</sup>

F W Newman (signed)